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NOW & THEN

THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

CENTER FOR APPALACHIAN STUDIES AND SERVICES EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

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Serving

APPALACHIA

Now & Then

Clara Barton and a circle of acquaintances founded the American Red Cross in Washington, D.C. on May 21, 1881. Barton first heard of the Swiss-inspired International Red Cross Movement while visiting Europe following the Civil War. In the 130 years since its founding, the American Red Cross has become synonymous with "serving community."

THEN

Between 1914 and 1918, Red Cross membership grew from 17,000 to more than 20 million adult and 11 million Junior Red Cross members. This photo shows Red Cross workers from that era.

Photo courtesy Archives of Appalachia, Burr Harrison Collection, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee.

NOW

Today more than a million Red Cross volunteers and 30,000 employees annually mobilize relief to people affected by more than 67,000 disasters. This photograph from the American Red Cross Greene County (Tennessee) Chapter shows a Red Cross mobile unit responding to local needs after the April 28, 2011 tornadoes. See related articles on pages 4 and 7.

Photo courtesy American Red Cross Greene County Chapter.

On the cover: An Appalachia Service Project volunteer takes a momentary break. Photo courtesy Appalachia Service Project. See related story on page 9.

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UPCOMING THEMES & DEADLINES

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By February 29, 2012

Global Appalachia
By August 31, 2012

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THE APPALACHIAN MAGAZINE

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The Mountain Farmer and Milton

Roberta Herrin
Director, Center for Appalachian Studies and Services

There was a farmer in my community who was known to be a good manager of his fields and a good caretaker of his family. He was a godly man. He attended Sunday morning and evening church services and Wednesday prayer meeting. He was quiet and humble, plain of speech and dress; he had few needs and was not inclined to travel. When hunters or hikers came upon him in some solitary field or oak grove, on his knees, praying aloud, they left him undisturbed. He was not thought to be wealthy. It was said that he could not read or write.

When he died, his memorial service was held in a large funeral home chapel, not in the church where he took communion with his neighbors and washed their feet, where he shouted when he was filled the spirit. His wife and three daughters, knowing the truth of his eighty-nine years, understood that the small mountain church would not accommodate the great numbers who would come to honor him—not to mourn but to honor. While he lived, he received no public tributes—no service awards, no plaques, no gold watches—and had they been proffered, he would have been embarrassed.

The funeral service disclosed an extraordinary life that had appeared to be unremarkable. One after the other, people told stories of quiet generosity and deeds of service: He gave words of encouragement to the downtrodden. He slipped twenty-dollar bills into shirt pockets. He purchased a new suit for a young man who heard the call to preach but had no clothes fit for the pulpit. He gave the money to build a new church in a distant community. He mentored. He never bragged.

As I listened to each eulogy, I pondered the definition of "service" and the human craving for recognition. I thought of the great academic trio—teaching, research, and service—and wondered whether any act of service that is a contractual requirement is, in truth, service. I questioned what commonly passes for altruism. And, then, a line of poetry came into my head: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

At first, these words from Milton's sonnet "On His Blindness" seemed inappropriate to the occasion of a mountain farmer's funeral. The persona in Milton's poem is a man whose blindness makes his "talent . . . useless," but this farmer had no infirmity that rendered him unable to serve. Quite the contrary: He served ably with all his "talents." And then I realized: To most members of his community, he appeared to stand and wait.

Milton's famous line of poetry settled among the eulogies delivered that day, becoming for me a tutorial on the nature of service. Because we do not know the quality or depth of another's service, we must take care not to judge it. In a world where public recognition is valued over humility, great acts of service go unnoticed every day: a suit of clothes, an uplifting word, a prayer in a solitary field. ❖

Editor's Notebook

Fred Sauceman

Piecing together a portrait of Ilo Birchfield Salyer is like working a jigsaw puzzle with edges frayed and rounded. The image of her in my mind is as cloudy as the 17-inch picture produced by the American Modern Magnavox console television set, the focal point of our living room in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with a turntable in the top, an AM-FM radio below, and that ever-present brown grill cloth so familiar to bedroom disc jockeys like me.

Ilo will always be black and white to me. My attempt to fill in the color has been tough. She's nonexistent on the Internet—fading, too, in the memories of other mid-twentieth century television viewers. Most of her half-hour variety shows were live, unrecorded and lost forever.

Like a host of other folks whose deeds are chronicled in this issue of *Now & Then*, Ilo served Appalachia through the unfettered sharing of her natural gifts and talents.

Her son Russell tells me there was nothing his mother couldn't do. She raised tobacco and knew how to grade it and tie it in hands. She poured concrete. She hauled horses in trailers to horse shows. She knew her way around a country ham and was a master sausage maker. She made blackberry wine in twenty-gallon crocks solely for the enjoyment of her friends and never drank a drop. Russell says the words "I can't" were not in her vocabulary. Neither were the words "I won't," when she knew someone needed her.

Ilo taught adult education classes in ceramics and instructed students on the fine points of making ladies' hats. She raised pheasants on her 34-acre farm at Cole Springs, between Kingsport and Bristol, and used the feathers in her hat-making. She gave away hats to her son's teachers at Christmastime.

Born in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, Ilo was best known for a rare talent she shared widely: her whistling. She made the circuit among East Tennessee churches imitating birds, accompanied by the piano. At home, when she wanted her children to come in from play, she whistled like a whippoorwill.

If Ilo knew something, she wanted others to know it as well, which motivated her to become a television host. "Memo from Ilo" ran on WJHL from 1957 to 1966, 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

For the enjoyment of her viewers, she conducted fashion shows, demonstrated sewing techniques, interviewed all sorts of personalities, and cooked, live, without the luxury of rehearsal or retakes. Casseroles were her specialty, and she was one of the first to promote the concept of the one-dish meal. One of her favorite dishes to fix on television was a fruitcake with real brandy.

Ilo Salyer died in 1987. When I read, in this issue, stories of heroes who have served Appalachia, never saying "I can't" or "I won't," I hear a whistle of approval from Ilo. ❖

Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness: Providing Shelter from the Storm

Kitty Juul

I became deeply saddened as I listened to the outgoing voicemail message:

Thank you for calling the Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness. We are currently out of the office. The HPRP is coming to an end and we are no longer able to take new clients. If you need a referral, please leave a message and someone will return your call.

The Homeless Prevention & Rapid Re-housing Program, known as the HPRP, came about through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It provides housing for people who suddenly find themselves in need of financial assistance for rent and utilities. Having witnessed firsthand how HPRP funds were used to help people affected by our recent tornados, it breaks my heart to see the program end.

How can any of us in northeastern Tennessee forget the night of April, 27, 2011? Crouching in my hallway, I could hear the East Tennessee State University alert warning system, a siren that was followed by a message: "*Attention! Life-threatening situation. A tornado has been sighted in the area. Seek shelter inside or take cover immediately. Stay away from windows and doors.*" It was an eerie sound in the night. But I was thankful that our community had such a great warning system. Having grown up in a "tornado alley" in southern Illinois, I was accustomed to such sirens on stormy nights. This warning siren, however, continued for an unusually long time.

Earlier that day, national television aired live footage of tornados ripping through Tuscaloosa and Birmingham, Alabama. As the tornado supercell moved closer to Tennessee, it caused enormous destruction. Hundreds of people were left homeless and injured, and many died. According to the National Weather Service, that night fifty-three tornados were spotted across East Tennessee and southwest Virginia, and over

The aftermath of an F-3 tornado in Horse Creek, Tennessee. Photo courtesy Kitty Juul.

thirty people in the area lost their lives in what would be known as the Tornado Super Outbreak of 2011.

East Tennessee, with its beautiful mountains, rolling hills, and winding valleys, does not seem like a place that would experience many tornados. The breathtaking landscape is matched by a genuine kindness among the people, making someone new to the area feel instantly at home. When I moved here, I was struck by the overwhelming desire of people to help others in need. I had never seen such a strong spirit of volunteerism so pervasive throughout an entire region. When I mention this to people, I almost always receive the same response: "You know, this *is* the Volunteer State."

One of the first people I met in Tennessee was Donald Minor, a member of the board of directors for the Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness. I had met Donald at a meeting of a consortium of organizations involved in disaster mitigation and response. At the meeting he invited everyone to a presentation he was giving about ARCH at a local church, and I decided to attend. During the presentation Donald explained the mission of ARCH: to end homelessness as currently experienced in Appalachia. With a staff of seven, ARCH serves as a clearinghouse for resources for homeless clients, and it partners with faith-based organizations and other community groups to ensure that individuals and families have homes. Housing assistance is provided to those with disabilities, families and individuals in need of transitional housing, victims of domestic violence, persons with HIV/AIDS, and veterans. In addition to housing assistance, ARCH works with community partners to provide legal help, entrepreneurial training, and workforce development.

Donald contacted me shortly after the presentation to inform me that Dreama Shreve had become the new executive director of ARCH. When I first met Dreama, I could instantly tell that she was just as passionate about helping those in need as Donald. She handed me her business card and said if there were ever a disaster in northeast Tennessee, to please remember to call her. Throughout my years of working in disaster preparedness and response, I have often heard the saying, "It's important to prepare for disaster, because it's not a matter of *if* a disaster will happen, it's *when*." I, however, did not believe there would ever be a need to call on ARCH. After all, we don't live in hurricane alley or tornado alley, do we?

On April 28, 2011, I woke up groggy after a night of little sleep. I looked out the window, and only a few

When I moved here, I was struck by the overwhelming desire of people to help others in need. I had never seen such a strong spirit of volunteerism so pervasive throughout an entire region.

branches were down. But then I turned on the radio and heard about the absolute devastation all around the region. I quickly made my way to my office at ETSU and was very relieved to see no sign of tornado destruction. While in the office I received a phone call informing me that an unknown number of communities were hit by tornados. It wasn't known yet how many homes had been destroyed or how many people were injured, missing, or killed. A little while later I received another call: Two of the hardest hit locations in our region were Horse Creek and Camp Creek, both in Greene County. Six people had died, dozens were injured, and numerous families were homeless. As I was on the phone with someone from Greene County discussing the need for housing for the survivors, I remembered Dreama Shreve's offer from months before. At that very moment a call came in on my other line. It was Dreama, who said, "We have resources for those who need housing; just tell us where to go."

Dreama spoke with her staff, which consisted of three case managers, an intake coordinator, a director of finance, and an office assistant. They all agreed, as a group, to travel to the areas affected by the tornados and assess damages. In Camp Creek and Horse Creek, the staff divided into three teams of two, and each team was accompanied by a local person who knew the families in the communities. Along with numerous individual volunteers and church groups, they worked tirelessly for several days. The ARCH staff went from door to door assessing housing needs. They found families, many with children, sleeping out in the open. Some of the families had tents. The goal of the ARCH staff was to get those who lost their homes into housing as soon as possible. During those first few days in

Camp Creek and Horse Creek, ARCH was able to assist twenty-seven households with housing and rent and utility deposits.

ARCH's contributions to the region have been enormous. In 2009 it received a $1.2 million grant from the HPRP. The funds were used to help 1,300 households with deposits and rent, including those left homeless by tornados. No longer are people with HIV/AIDS having to live in tent communities: ARCH has been able to work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS program to find them homes. Case managers at ARCH refer clients in need of medical assistance to the local health department, and Ryan White funds are used to pay medical expenses associated with HIV/AIDS treatment. A large percentage of the people ARCH serves are veterans, many of whom have recently returned from Iraq or Afghanistan and have young families. These veterans have received workforce training, and they and their families have been placed in homes. The job is not done, though. ARCH continues to work with those affected by the tornados. The number of veterans and their families needing assistance is increasing, as is the number of former middle-class and upper-middle-class families seeking assistance due to loss of employment.

When the staff talks about the services they provide to the community, one can see in their eyes and hear in their voices the passion they have for the work and the caring they have for their clients. The employees of ARCH epitomize the spirit of so many people in this region: kind, generous, and compassionate. Unfortunately, funding for the HPRP ended on September 30, 2011, and the staff is anticipating layoffs. An important program may end, but the impact it has had on those who are facing crises will last a lifetime.

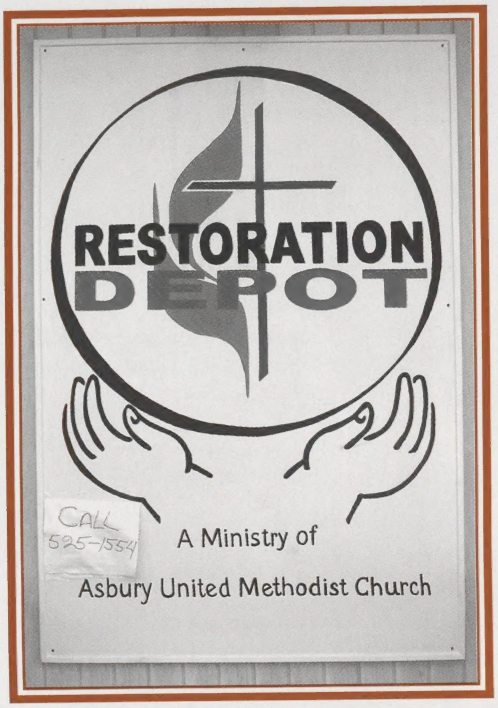
There is no greater calling than to serve humanity. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well. ARCH has done it very well. ❖

Kitty Juul is a curriculum design manager at the ETSU Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium, a program chartered by Congress to develop and deliver courses that prepare rural first responders and medical professionals to operate during disasters. She earned a master's degree in community and regional planning from the University of New Mexico.

Families lived in tents amid the rubble of their former homes. Photo courtesy Dreama Shreve.

Restoration Depot

Bryan Gillespie



The tornadoes that tore through East Tennessee on the evening of April 27 and early morning of April 28, 2011, left many homes destroyed or damaged, and the long process of rebuilding has many families wondering if they will be able to return to the lives they once had. Called the Dixie Outbreak by meteorologists, 211 confirmed tornadoes wreaked havoc in states across the South and Midwest from April 25 through April 28, setting a one-day record of tornado deaths since 1950 at 339. This once-in-a-generation experience for Upper East Tennessee spawned more than twenty tornadoes. The five that hit the Camp Creek and Horse Creek communities of Greene County caused seven deaths, injured nearly 100, and destroyed or severely damaged more than 150 houses and mobile homes. Damage estimates in the county exceeded $12 million.

Helping families restore their lives has become an outreach mission of Asbury United Methodist Church in Greeneville, with the creation of Restoration Depot. The Reverend Jeannie Higgins, associate pastor at Asbury and coordinator of the outreach ministry, said the church had already begun planning to serve families in need of essential household furnishings, appliances, and building supplies when the tornadoes struck Greene County. "That intensified our effort to create this ministry," she said. "Knowing that many families lost everything and that it is costly to recover was key to the church getting this ministry into action."

To help get the process started, church member Marge Saulsbury volunteered the use of over 10,000-square feet of storage space in her family-owned warehouse—originally Magnavox Plant 1 in downtown Greeneville. After locating its first Southern assembly plant in a converted tobacco warehouse in 1947, Magnavox would eventually become the largest industry in Greene County with as many as 5,000 hourly and salaried employees producing 10,000 to 12,000 television sets a day at its peak in the 1970s. By 1971, 40 percent of the jobs in Greene County were at

The Restoration Depot, an outreach ministry of Asbury United Methodist Church, provides donated household furnishings, appliances, and building supplies to families affected by the April 27-28 tornadoes and other disasters in Greene County.

Magnavox. Purchased by Marge's late husband Lloyd in the early 1980s, the warehouse has been used by a number of companies and most recently served as the site for the Friends of the Greeneville-Greene County Library's annual book sale. Now the site has come back to life serving those affected by disaster.

A call went out from the church for donations of good used furniture, household appliances, and building supplies, and church members as well as people in the community responded by bringing truckloads of those essential items to the warehouse. Volunteers from the church take two days to clean up and arrange the items in different areas of the warehouse in an orderly system.

Those who qualify for assistance are referred to the Restoration Depot through the Greeneville-Greene County Community Ministry, also known as the Food Bank, as well as through AIDNET (Aiding in Disasters Northeast Tennessee), originally established to help families after devastating floods swept through the county in 2001.

At the warehouse, volunteers assist those in need with a checklist of the essential items they have requested to begin the recovery process. A section of the warehouse is set up with donated dishes, bowls, and silverware along with cooking utensils and kitchen items for every need. Another section has mattresses and box springs; furniture (from dining room tables and chairs to couches and recliners and desks) fills several large sections of the storage space. Doors, windows, roofing material, and building supplies line the walls for the do-it-yourselfers.

Terri Worley, who lived with her husband and son in the Camp Creek community for ten years, lost everything when a tornado destroyed their four-bedroom home. The next day, she could not even bring herself to go back into the wreckage to search for salvageable items.

"When all you have are the clothes you are wearing and don't even have things like a toothbrush, it makes you feel terrible," Worley said as she began checking off the furniture, bedding, kitchen appliances, and utensils her family would need to begin setting up a home once again. "We only had mortgage insurance. We'll be getting a new double-wide mobile home to replace our house, but we weren't going to be able to replace our furniture and kitchen supplies. This is absolutely wonderful. God bless these good people for doing this for families like mine who really need help."

Eight families have been served at the Restoration Depot to date, with seven in the process of recovering from the tornadoes and one family having lost everything they owned in a fire. ❖

Bryan Gillespie is a freelance photojournalist who has lived and worked in Greeneville, Tennessee, for more than thirty years.

***Top**: This converted tobacco warehouse, which was once Magnavox in Greeneville, now holds donated furniture, appliances, and building supplies. **Bottom**: Becki McInturff (left) assists Terri Worley (right) in selecting household furnishings. All photos courtesy Bryan Gillespie.*

Changed

Randy Sanders

"On May 11, 2002, at 2:58 a.m. I died. I mean, they [the doctors] brought me back, but our lives changed in the blink of an eye on that morning."

Lisa Casteel is describing the early morning head-on collision that neither she nor her husband Boyd remembers.

"I remember getting him [Boyd] up; fixing coffee. My mom was living with us at the time, and for some reason she didn't go with us that day. I remember leaving the house. After that, the only thing I remember was waking up in the hospital."

Boyd and Lisa were, as they describe it, living the American Dream. They owned two homes—one of which they rented to supplement an already ample household income.

"We didn't want for much," Boyd adds. "We worked hard. We could go out to eat if we wanted to. We could go to Gatlinburg if we wanted to. We had cash in our pockets. When you cut that off, when it stops like that [he snaps his fingers], when you can't provide for your family, it makes you feel about two inches tall. It makes you feel less human than you can possibly believe."

Boyd, who had worked as a Carter County, Tennessee, deputy sheriff, had seen his share of traffic accidents involving drunk drivers. On May 11, 2002, he and Lisa came face-to-face with such a driver. They were on their way to pick up *Johnson City Press* newspapers that Lisa was to deliver as one of her two jobs.

Today, Boyd can walk—not well and not for long, but he is mobile. His right foot is held together with metal pins. Lisa now lives most of her life in a wheelchair. Surgeons used more than twenty metal rods and pins to piece her body together. The x-rays of her pelvis look like an internal erector set project. The other driver sustained a broken nose.

Boyd and Lisa Casteel with ASP staff Torey Davenport and Mike Milero. Photo courtesy Appalachia Service Project.

The Casteels' medical bills exceeded $300,000. The accident left them both on 100 percent Social Security disability. Unable to work and with no family support to fall back on, Boyd and Lisa lost their American dream.

"I've worked like a dog since I was seventeen years old; was in the military; paid my taxes . . . . " Boyd's voice trails off.

"We were both depressed," he continues. "And I was getting bitter. Our roof started leaking, and we didn't have the money to fix it. I got so desperate that I got on the computer and typed *'Who helps poor people?'* Eventually that's how I found the Appalachia Service Project."

The Casteels are the sort of people Glenn "Tex" Evans had in mind when, in 1969, he founded the Appalachia Service Project. A United Methodist minister, Reverend Evans served as superintendent at Henderson Settlement in eastern Kentucky from 1953 to 1966. During his time at Henderson, he witnessed firsthand the region's need for home repair assistance.

ASP, a Christian ministry open to all people, brings volunteers to Central Appalachia to repair homes for low-income families. Forty-two years after its founding, ASP has a distinguished track record of service: Approximately 310,000 volunteers have worked on 15,000 homes in the region. Ask any ASP staff member about that record, and he or she will likely point out that ASP is only able to help about one out of every ten families who apply. The need is that great.

The ASP concept is deceptively simple. Volunteers from throughout the United States pay both transportation costs and other fees to come to Central Appalachia to work on the homes of strangers. ASP provides lodging, meals, construction materials, supervision, and evening programming and entertainment. Prescreened client families pay nothing to have their homes made warmer, safer, drier, or generally more livable by those volunteers. But ASP is about much more than repairing homes. The alchemy that makes ASP so special can be found in the connections made among ASP staff, client families, and volunteers—like volunteer and former staff member Abraham McIntyre.

"I was a freshman in high school when I started as an ASP volunteer," McIntyre said. "I only missed one summer mission trip in high school. When I was a junior I had soccer camp at the same time as the ASP trip. I did an ASP mission trip after my freshman year in college, so that was four mission trips in five years. I then served for three consecutive full summers as well as working for two half summers as the first ASP dump truck driver.

"From an early age I enjoyed serving others. I suppose it's a family tradition. My dad is a retired Methodist minister. We moved around a lot when I was growing up. But serving others is something you can take with you wherever you live.

"ASP gave me a new perspective on life. About three months ago one of my buddies showed me this satirical website about First World problems—like, *'A First World problem is when your hand won't fit down into the bottom of a Pringles can, and you have to actually turn the can upside down to get the chips out.'* That may be funny to some, but there are plenty of Third World families who can only dream about silly problems like that.

"I remember this fellow named Sydney, a double amputee, who lived up in Leslie County, Kentucky. He had crutches, but it was really a bad, bad situation. Where he lived was literally an old pigpen that he'd added on to and made into his home. We worked with him to make his place more livable. He had no running water, so our staff raised enough money to have a well drilled for him. Just getting water into somebody's house is an incredible thing. Most of us don't even think about that. We go to the sink, turn on the water. Simple. But that's not the case for everyone—for some people, some families, basic necessities are a miracle.

"At the start of an ASP mission week, Tex Evans used to say to volunteers that he hoped they had a good week. He hoped things changed, but if they never came back to Appalachia, he hoped they would take the experiences as an ASP volunteer home and let

Glenn "Tex" Evans, founder of Appalachia Service Project. Photo courtesy Appalachia Service Project.

others know about those experiences. I think he knew the lives of those volunteers were about to change."

Evans inspired a generation of young United Methodists to go into the world with a mission of demonstrating evangelism in action. His universal message of serving others transcends national borders and denominations. Upon his death from cancer on July 25, 1978, his body was given to Meharry Medical College in Nashville, but his spirit lives on in the lives of the clients, volunteers, and staff members of the Appalachia Service Project.

In 2010, Abraham McIntyre was invited to speak at the annual ASP President's Forum. He opened his remarks by saying:

> One of my favorite statements of all times is this:
>
> *It's kind of like ASP, but in* _____. Allow me to fill in the blank.
>
> *It's kind of like ASP, but in Gainesville, Florida*—ReBuild Gainesville—later to be affiliated with Rebuilding Together of North Central Florida, Director, Melisa Miller, past ASP volunteer and staff.
>
> *It's kind of like ASP, but in New Orleans*—Project Homecoming—Operations Director, Kevin Krejci; PR Director, Vann Joines, both past ASP volunteers and staff.
>
> *It's kind of like ASP but in Louisiana*—Project Noah—Director, Cristina Dimengo, past ASP volunteer and staff.
>
> Last, but not least, and probably my favorite:
>
> *It's kind of like ASP, but in The Bahamas*—Bahamas Methodist Habitat—Director, Abraham McIntyre, past ASP volunteer and staff. As I said, this is just to name a few. There are many other examples that I know about and thousands more that we will probably never hear of. *It's kind of like ASP,* but in my and your own community!

Abraham McIntyre certainly "gets" the transformative nature of organizations like Bahamas Methodist Habitat and ASP.

"This past spring," he began, "on the night before one of our volunteer groups was to leave, we sat in a circle to reflect and share experiences from the week.

I wrote down a sentence or two from each person's sharing. Then I asked, 'How many times did I write down *two-by-fours*?' 'How many times did someone say *hammer*?' 'Or *skilsaw*?' Out of forty responses, maybe one or two people shared anything about building materials or tools. Here we are a construction-based ministry, just like ASP is, but nobody talks about that because our deepest ministry is about relationships that bring people together."

Boyd and Lisa Casteel tell a similar story from a client family perspective. They have photographs of ASP volunteers in their living room. Lisa proudly displays a cross pendant made out of horseshoe nails and a prayer shawl made for her by volunteers.

"What those volunteers are doing," she says, "is more than building something for somebody. They're actually putting hope back into people's souls. What they did for us is more than this solid floor or that ramp out there. It's like they gave us a new lease on life. You could take away this floor or that ramp, but I'd fight you before I'd give up my cross, or those pictures, or that prayer shawl. ASP changed us." ❖

Randy Sanders is managing editor of *Now & Then*.

Abe McIntyre and Betsy Grear Loe with ASP dump truck. Photo courtesy Appalachia Service Project.

Mary Rose Batterham: The Second Registered Nurse in the United States

Phoebe Pollitt

Mary Rose Batterham spent her first decade as a nurse battling everything from a typhoid epidemic to state legislators. She was a rare woman with the ability to assist in surgeries performed on kitchen tables in Appalachian mountain cabins without benefit of running water or electricity, the gift to write and speak persuasively to any size organization to promote nursing practice and education, the leadership qualities to be elected by her fellow nurses to represent them at state and national meetings, and the imagination and resourcefulness to help create the new profession of Registered Nursing. She was one of the fifteen women she characterized in her speeches about the founding of the North Carolina State Nurses Association as "all nurses, making history, constructionists, iconoclasts, destroying the old conception of the graduate nurse and raising the trained woman to the dignity of a professional woman."

Mary Rose Batterham was born in Walsoken, Norfolk County, England in 1858. In 1881 her family immigrated to Asheville, North Carolina. Batterham wanted to practice nursing, but no nursing schools had been established in North Carolina at that time. In 1893 she graduated from the Brooklyn City Hospital School of Nursing, secured a position as a nurse for the policy holders of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, and returned to Asheville, becoming the third graduate nurse in the city.

Almost immediately she was in great demand as a private-duty nurse and took many surgical cases. The first hospitals in Asheville were emerging around the time of her return, and there was only one operating room in the city. Therefore, most surgeries, both major and minor, were performed in patients' homes. In one of her speeches, Batterham described the role of the nurse in home surgeries. She described how the nurse often arrived the night prior to surgery to clean the house and the patient. The day of surgery began by boiling instruments and a supply of extra water on a wood stove. Beds, dining room tables, or most often kitchen tables served as operating tables, layered with blankets and covered with clean sheets. Nurses did whatever a

Mary Rose Batterham. Photo courtesy the American Journal of Nursing.

doctor needed, including assisting with surgery and giving anesthetics. After the doctor left, a nurse often stayed behind to watch over the patient's recuperation and clean up the surroundings.

In 1900, typhoid swept through North Carolina Women's College in Greensboro. College officials asked for graduate nurses to help cope with the epidemic. Many of them stayed for several weeks as the epidemic ran its course. During their leisure hours they discussed issues related to nursing practice, nursing education, and nursing regulation. Mary Rose Batterham and Mary Lewis Wyche were two of these "Greensboro" nurses. In the months after the epidemic, Wyche wrote to all of the "Greensboro" nurses and other nurses she knew in the state, asking them to send representatives from their towns to a statewide meeting in Raleigh. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain if there was enough interest to organize a state nurses association and work for a nurse registration law.

Thirty-five nurses met in Asheville and elected Mary Rose Batterham to represent them at the Raleigh meeting. The group raised twenty-five dollars to cover her travel expenses. Fifteen nurses attended the Raleigh meeting. They organized themselves into the North Carolina State Nurse Association in October of 1902. Wyche was elected president and Batterham first vice president.

The second day of the Raleigh meeting was given to drafting a nursing registration bill, which was introduced in the state legislature in January of 1903. It passed the House as written by the nurses, but by the time it arrived at the senate, some doctors and hospital administrators had organized opposition. A weakened bill, without mandatory registration, passed the senate and was signed by Governor Aycock on March 3, 1903. This was the first law pertaining to nursing practice in the United States. Legal criteria now existed in order for someone to use the title "Registered Nurse." The names of nurses who met the criteria and presented documentation to the Clerk of Court in the county in which they wished to practice would be entered in a Nurses Registry, kept in each county courthouse and available to the public.

By prior arrangement, and in honor of the work and dedication that Batterham showed to the people of Asheville and Buncombe County, the Clerk of Court opened his office an hour early so she could become the first Registered Nurse in North Carolina and therefore the first Registered Nurse in the United States.

Over the next twenty-four years, until her death in 1927, she continuously proved her dedication to her profession and to the betterment of her fellow citizens. In a speech to the 1922 session of the NCSNA, she suggested private-duty nurses volunteer occasionally with public health nurses: "We can enjoy a day with the county nurse, helping with the school or office work, also giving clinical demonstrations and lectures, at the same time learning practical engineering and how to run a car."

In a speech to the Federated Women's Clubs of Asheville in 1920, she advocated for the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act to fund more nurses to work in maternal child health: "I have been in homes where conditions would make an angel weep; a newborn baby and a mother attended by a lady whose chief pretention to cleanliness was a clean apron, taken off after the doctor left; a hatchet under the bed or a knife under the pillow to cut the pains; and not a sheet or clean gown in the house. Is it any wonder we lose 18,000 mothers and 300,000 babies every year?"

In addition to her advocacy for the public's health, she worked to upgrade the nursing profession. She helped craft the first nurse registration bill and several revisions of it. She lobbied for mandatory registration for nurses (a law that would not pass in North Carolina until 1965). And she campaigned for shorter hours, better pay, and better working and living conditions for nurses.

Not satisfied with asking others to make the changes she envisioned, in 1919, Batterham organized a Nurses Clubhouse in Asheville. Private duty nurses, Batterham included, lived in the clubhouse between cases, and all nurses were welcome to come to social and professional events sponsored by the clubhouse.

Batterham never married. Upon her death, her body lay in state at the Nurses Clubhouse, and her pallbearers were her nursing colleagues in full uniform. the *Asheville Citizen* newspaper wrote of her: "For nearly thirty five years Miss Mary Rose Batterham was a ministering angel to the people of this town . . . . For more than a generation, here among us, she stood valiant in the presence of pestilence, and fought to defeat pain and to conquer disease and to cheat death its untimely prey. Hers was the good fight, not for glory or gain, but, with

mercy and compassion as her weapons, to disarm grief in its agony and tears."

Batterham was honored many times as the first Registered Nurse in the United States. Articles in the *American Journal of Nursing* and the *Asheville Citizen* described her in that way. But in 1935 when the County Nursing Registries in North Carolina were sent to Raleigh for central keeping, it was discovered that Josephine Burton of Craven County had registered on June 4, 1903. Little is known about Burton, the first Registered Nurse in the United States.

Mary Rose Batterham, organizer, writer, speaker, advocate, nurse, died believing she was the first Registered Nurse in the United States. Her tireless work to improve the quality of life for the public and for nurses continues to inspire those who have followed her in the profession. ❖

Phoebe Pollitt is assistant professor of nursing at Appalachian State University.

Post Mark Appalachia

G. C. Compton

You know me.
Named for two star-crossed lovers, or the place where Great Grand Pap
killed a bear in 1892,
I am the news of Stopover, Kentucky, the town hall of Pilgrims Knob, Virginia,
and the raconteur of Canesville Road in Tennessee.
I bring you word from Bumblebee, Arizona, Peru, Indiana,
and River Rouge, Michigan:
Dear Irene,
How are you? Fine I hope. How's that Homer? Fine I hope.
We're all fine but Virgil. He's backslid again.
Up here it's bars and women.
Dear Mildred,
Just a few lines to let you know we're all fine on Brushy.
Don't worry none about Virgil.
Sister Slone stood in prayer for him Wednesday night
at Abundant Tithings True Gospel Church of the Heaven Bound.
At Bean Station, Tennessee,
I started a farm with one hundred Pennsylvania Red Top chicks.
It was I who turned the head of widow Haney's new man
with a whalebone corset from Montgomery Ward.
I took two years off Shirley Dobbs
with a quart jar of wrinkle cream from QVC—

Continued on page 15

$90.00 and three months on Easy Pay.
When the bombs fell on Iwo Jima and Okinawa,
I crossed an ocean with the hearts of lovers.
From the girls at Red Jacket, West Virginia,
to Polkville, North Carolina,
I sent pressed flowers and lipstick kisses
to our men in the Philippines.
I returned with grass skirts, wooden fans
and promises.
I'm sorry the letter was late from Sergeant Billy Wayne,
somewhere north of Da Nang:
Mae, my darling, how's things in old Virgie Town?
It's bad here in Nam, but we have to be strong.
I'm counting the days till I come home,
counting the days till we get married…
For seven days that May I flew the stars and stripes at half staff.
From the Back Alleghenies to Iraq, from the Great Smokies to Afghanistan
I joined hands across the water.
They said I was too old at Elwood, Kentucky,
with my sun bleached face blind with ivy.
So I was built new from cinder blocks
laid in one day by Dry John Elliott
for a case of Pabst Blue Ribbon.
I'm still a bit old-fashioned.
Don't e-mail me when you're out of town.
I won't answer.
Drop me a line—or stop by when you're back this way.
Brother Milford has saved you some plum granny seeds,
and Sylvia Hall has that recipe for slick dumplings.
Never mind if you can't come.
Postmaster Lou will feed your cats
and Boone Burke will leave your mail
behind the screen door.

G.C. Compton from Pike County, Kentucky, has published numerous stories, poems, and essays on Appalachian themes. His first short story collection is *Black Lung Washing Machine* (Wind Publications, 2011).

Service through Opportunity

Michael Joslin

Tainted with despair
Wilted with lack of care
Lost within a self of darkness
Captured by a well of loneliness
Aching to be rescued
Why?
How?
When?
Guidance—a miracle—
Just one hint of light
A new beginning in sight
It is time.
—Jennie Abbott, NOSW 2011

Opportunity—for some people life abounds with chances for success; for others, their background and circumstances provide only bad breaks and bleak prospects. For some Appalachian women, though they live in the beautiful mountain environment, isolation and lack of a support system have left them unable to realize their potential for success. Instead of reaching mountaintops, they spend their lives in valleys of despair. Perhaps the greatest service we can render is to open pathways to the crest and help these women make the climb.

To awaken women to the fact that they do have choices that can improve their lives, Banner Elk, North Carolina, native Jane Baucom Stephenson started the New Opportunity School for Women at Kentucky's Berea College in 1987. Stephenson, a 1957 graduate of Lees-McRae College, lived in Berea as the wife of Berea College President John Stephenson, a former Lees-McRae College professor. Her mountain childhood and her role as first lady of Berea opened her eyes to the unhappy plight of many rural women in the area.

"It was to meet a need that we started the program," Stephenson said. "Living in Berea, I met a lot of women in difficulty, and I realized that women in rural areas don't have access to programs and professionals who can help them explore their potential and explore opportunities."

Although her husband died in 1994, Stephenson continued to develop the program, and in his memory, she and her family helped establish and fund the

Jane Stephenson addresses NOSW graduates and guests. Photo courtesy Michael Joslin.

Stephenson Center for Appalachia at Lees-McRae. In 2005, the NOSW expanded to Lees-McRae under the Stephenson Center. As director of the center, I have come to know Jane and her NOSW program well. Born and raised in Banner Elk, she has a lifetime of experience with rural Appalachia, its culture, and its people. She recognizes that mountain women face a number of issues that the NOSW can address.

"They may be needing a job, or needing to go back to school, or needing to make a major change in their lives, or needing to find out what their skills are and what they need to develop their skills. Many of our participants come to us from shelters or abusive relationships or lacking a support system."

The NOSW is an intensive, three-week residential program that prepares women to advance their lives through a rigorous course of study that includes such subjects as Appalachian literature, job search skills, computer skills, leadership development, self-esteem building, creative writing, and math. Each woman also serves an internship during the program.

In addition to formal classes and internships, participants enjoy weekend and evening activities such as field trips to historic places and museums and attendance at theatrical and musical programs in the area.

Along with a makeover of hairstyles and makeup, participants learn the kind of clothes to wear in professional situations and get to build a professional wardrobe from clothes that have been donated. In addition, they participate in workshops on how to continue their education. Such topics as applying to college, receiving financial aid, and taking the SAT or ACT remove the mystery from pursuing educational opportunities.

In the summer of 2012, the twenty-fifth anniversary class will graduate from the Berea program. To date, Berea has graduated 599 women from the NOSW. Data from Berea's 2010 survey show that of the nearly 600 women who completed the program:

- Seventy-nine percent are employed, in school, or both.
- Eighty percent have completed some form of higher/continued education.
- Twenty-five percent of respondents' children and/or grandchildren now have college degrees. Two percent have a master's degree, and an additional twenty percent have attended some college classes.
- Eighty-seven percent have experienced improved personal circumstances since graduation from the NOSW.

The expansion of NOSW at Lees-McRae is modeled on Berea's program. With the same goal to "improve the educational, financial, and personal circumstances of low-income women" in the Appalachian region, the Banner Elk campus, under current director Carrie Guy, graduated its sixty-eighth woman in the summer of 2011.

I have taught Appalachian literature and creative writing in the Lees-McRae NOSW program for several years and have experienced firsthand the changes that occur in those who accept the challenge to attend the school:

My life is changing
Rearranging
Different from before
No longer forlorn
Sun shines again
Tears have dried
Though they once fell like rain
Yes, for the better
My life is changing.
—Jess Stone, NOSW 2011

Women from the Appalachian region of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia are eligible to participate in the school at Lees-McRae, while the Berea program accepts women from Kentucky, West Virginia, and South-Central Appalachia. Applicants should have completed high school or have a GED, but not a college degree, and have a low income. Approximate ages range from thirty to fifty-five.

I have found that many of the women enter the school with both negative self-images and negative images of their Appalachian home. Too often our students have accepted stereotypes that denigrate people of the mountains, both our ancestors and our contemporaries. Fortunately, my experience has shown me that such attitudes can be quickly reversed as the women encounter positive role models from our literature. When they read what Gurney Norman, Wilma Dykeman, Gwyn Rubio, Jesse Stuart, James Still,

Frank Walker, and Jim Wayne Miller have to say in their prose and poetry, I see these Appalachian women grow in pride and understanding both of themselves and their culture. Such transformations keep the volunteers and professionals who run the NOSW programs enthusiastically engaged.

In the summer of 2011, our self-esteem instructor at Lees-McRae's NOSW was Rose Hampton, a 2005 graduate of Lees-McRae's NOSW. After graduation she applied to and was accepted by Lees-McRae, where she completed her B.S. degree in psychology. She then attended the University of South Carolina, where she earned her master's degree in social work. Her coming full circle has inspired everyone from students to directors.

Lori Sliwa, former director at Lees-McRae, now directs the program at Berea. Her perspective explains much about the missionary zeal of the NOSW:

"The mission of the New Opportunity School for Women inspired and moved me from the first time I learned of the program in 2007 when I had the privilege of serving as the director of our expansion site at Lees-McRae College. I can think of no greater reward than to work with a program serving women and helping them find their true potential. Living in the Appalachian region, I see first-hand the lack of opportunities and resources, and I also see the hopelessness in a woman's eyes when she feels there are no options. I strongly believe in the mission of providing education, hands-on job training, and, most importantly, an environment where women feel safe enough to share their fears and dreams. The self-esteem component is critical; this is one of the many reasons that the New Opportunity School for Women is unique and effective."

To serve more women, recently the New Opportunity School for Women Foundation, Inc. has formed both to support the existing programs through fundraising and to expand the NOSW to additional sites throughout Appalachia.

"We've been working for several years to establish the foundation, and this year we got our 501(c) (3) and hired a director, Billy Newton, who started in June," says Jane Stephenson, who continues to nurture the NOSW in many ways.

"What I want to see is more NOSW programs throughout Appalachia in order to serve more Appalachian women in the future. The expansion to LMC has been so successful that I would anticipate more expansion sites over the next few years, hopefully into West Virginia, Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia. The effects this program has had on the total family, especially children and grandchildren, make it vital to Appalachia's future. Locating the program on a college campus helps women learn how to go to school and how to get financial aid. They are passing that information on to their children and grandchildren who, in turn, take advantage of higher education chances."

There is no cost to participants to attend the NOSW sessions. Room and meals are provided at no charge. Grants cover such costs as childcare and travel.

New Opportunity School for Women
Has been a real blast
I've learned a lot
I'm going forward leaving the past.

New Opportunity School for Women
I know I can do this
I've got the tools
And I'm going to persist.

New Opportunity School for Women
Should be everyone's goal
I know NOSW has helped me
To make me nice and whole.

New Opportunity School for Women
It's a great place to be
With some wonderful ideas
It's making me free!

New Opportunity School for Women
I'll never forget being here
It's such a place of love
I add what I have learned and cheer.

New Opportunity School for Women
Will be talked about forever more
I'll do publicity for it
And remember it with love galore!

—Mary Ann Morrison, NOSW 2011

Michael Joslin, a frequent *Now & Then* contributor, teaches at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina.

Coming Full Circle: Jennie Moore's Work at Rocky Fork

Janice Willis Barnett

My granny leaned back in her 1970s gold Naugahyde recliner as I started the recorder. "Miss Moore was tough but fair," she said.

I listened as once again Granny told the story about Presbyterian missionary-teacher Jennie Moore scolding her students, while six-year-old Granny eyed the nearest window in the one-room church that also served as a school. It was 1903, Granny's first year in school and the first class Miss Moore taught at Rocky Fork in the southern end of Unicoi County in northeast Tennessee.

"I didn't want to go to school because I'd heard the teacher might whip you," Granny said. "But my daddy said that if I'd go, he'd see to it that didn't happen. One day, some of us didn't know our lessons, so Miss Moore said she was going to use old Limber Jim on us. She left to get the switch, and I jumped out the window and walked home and told my daddy what happened. He didn't say anything until after we had eat our dinner. Then he went outside and whistled for the horse and asked if it wasn't about time we headed back to school.

"I rode in front of him on the horse, worried to death that Miss Moore was going to wear me out when we got there. But my daddy asked her if she could give me some kind of punishment besides a whipping, and she asked if it would be all right to make me stand in front of the class and apologize.

"I didn't mean a word of it, but I did my lessons after that."

At this point in Granny's story, the scene fast-forwarded six years to the time she and her sister and two of their classmates rode in a mule-drawn wagon from Rocky Fork to Bell Institute, a Presbyterian mission school for girls in nearby Madison County, North Carolina. Miss Moore had helped them get work scholarships to the school. Granny always named the

The Rocky Fork congregation in front of Jennie Moore Presbyterian Church, named for their beloved teacher and missionary. Miss Moore is third from the right in the fourth row from the back. Photo courtesy Jennie Moore Presbyterian Church.

territory they passed through on their journey: "We went from Rocky Fork, up Devil's Fork, and down through Shelton Laurel to get to Walnut where the Bell Institute was located."

She took her injured foot in her hands and twisted it back into place, then crawled back up to the trail, caught her mule, recovered the saddle, and used a handkerchief to replace the broken girth. She remounted the mule and rode the remaining 10 miles to the rail station near Erwin.

All the girls at the school had work assignments in addition to their classroom studies. Granny never tired of talking about the two years she spent there, taking classes and baking fat loaves of wheat bread in the school's big kitchen. Even in the years before her death in 1994, she was still praising the "tough but fair" Miss Moore, who had sent her to the wonderful Bell Institute.

Though some older Unicoi County residents still say Miss Moore was "from up north," she was actually a native northeast Tennessean from nearby Hamblen County. Before starting the Presbyterian mission at Rocky Fork, she had served as a missionary to the Sioux Indians in South Dakota. According to records in the Presbyterian Church USA's historical archives, Miss Moore helped nearly 700 students obtain scholarships to Presbyterian mission schools in western North Carolina and northeastern Tennessee. Many of these students were from mountain communities surrounding Rocky Fork, and their religious affiliation wasn't necessarily Presbyterian.

A February 1935 "National Missions" bulletin from the Presbyterian archives praises Miss Moore, stating that her "primary interest was always to teach the Christian way of life, develop a community spirit, and raise social and economic standards."

An archived letter written by Warren H. Wilson, founder of the Presbyterian mission school that is today's Warren Wilson College, illustrates Miss Moore's determination to broaden her students' horizons. Wilson recalls her telling about the adversity she faced while escorting a group of students to the Appalachian Exposition of 1910, held in Knoxville—the first of its kind in northeast Tennessee. The exposition showcased progress in southern industry and commerce by exhibiting the first aeroplane seen in the area as well as the latest advances in agriculture and manufacturing. The Women's Building focused on time-saving techniques that could be used in homemaking and child care: the new "domestic science" of the time.

Wilson's letter recounts that Miss Moore and the students left Rocky Fork and headed for the nearest Unicoi County rail station, 15 miles away, one morning in September to catch the train to Knoxville. They rode mules, making their way on paths along streams or on tram roads built by the logging industry. Just as they had about 10 miles left to go, a boy, not with the group, jumped out of the bushes and spooked Miss Moore's mule. It threw her and she tumbled down an embankment, knocked unconscious.

On recovering, Miss Moore discovered that one of her feet was twisted. The sole was turned up toward her face and the knee above it broken. She took her injured foot in her hands and twisted it back into place, then crawled back up to the trail, caught her mule, recovered the saddle, and used a handkerchief to replace the broken girth. She remounted the mule and rode the remaining 10 miles to the rail station near Erwin, refusing to go to a hospital until after she took the children to the exposition.

I never heard Granny tell this story. She was deceased by the time I learned of it while doing research for a series of stories about Rocky Fork for my hometown newspaper, *The Erwin Record*. Because of Granny's high opinion of her former teacher, I expected nothing but adulation for Miss Moore from the older residents I interviewed, and I found plenty of it, along with other comments and experiences I didn't include in the story for the paper.

When I asked one older woman if she had any stories to share about Miss Moore, she glared at me and said, "Jennie Moore told everybody what to do." Then she clamped her mouth shut and let me know she wasn't saying anything else. I changed the conversation to the woman's years as a schoolteacher. She informed me that she had received her college education without any help from Miss Moore.

Miss Moore had spent much time in the home of another interviewee when the woman was growing up. With Miss Moore's help, the woman's mother

had earned her teacher's certificate from one of the Presbyterian mission schools in western North Carolina. Miss Moore had also helped the interviewee get her high school education from one of these schools. I knew before asking for the interview that I had better be well-mannered, respectably dressed, and tighten my mountain vowels if I expected to be taken seriously. When we talked, the woman indicated that she had the utmost respect for Miss Moore and greatly appreciated her help but had no stories to share. The impression I received was that she considered publishing "mountain tales" about Miss Moore and the people she served somehow improper.

Then I visited Louise Treadway, who had her dining room table covered in photographs from Miss Moore's days at Rocky Fork. Louise's mother had been one of the girls who rode the mule-drawn wagon to Bell Institute with my granny. We talked about Miss Moore and the photographs for the entire afternoon, letting our mountain vowels run free.

Louise is a member of Jennie Moore Memorial Presbyterian Church, built in 1942 to replace the one-room Rocky Fork Presbyterian Church that had also served as a classroom for Miss Moore and her students. One of the photographs shows the congregation standing in front of the new church during its dedication ceremony in 1942, when it was named for Miss Moore. Having left the area after retiring in 1933, she had traveled back to Rocky Fork for the occasion. Louise pointed out that the men and boys in the dedication picture were wearing suit jackets and ties and compared it to a picture of their recent one-hundredth anniversary celebration as a congregation. In the picture from 2001, many of the men were wearing overalls.

Louise explained that the congregation wanted to look the way people did during Miss Moore's time at Rocky Fork. "But this is not the way they looked

because Miss Moore would have died if they had come (to church) in overalls," she said. "You don't see any of the people at the dedication in overalls." She explained that in many cases, the congregation's "Sunday" clothes came from mission barrels sent from northern churches and that Miss Moore expected the people to wear them.

I laughed, thinking how the overalls were a perfect symbol for the success of Miss Moore's work at Rocky Fork. Her goal had been to help educate the mountain people so they could have more choices in life. Perhaps she would have been glad the day had come when the descendants of those she served could choose to honor their mountain heritage by wearing overalls with great pride on the one-hundredth anniversary of the church their ancestors had named for her. ❖

Janice Willis Barnett is a contributor to "Inside Appalachia," produced by West Virginia Public Broadcasting. She is the author of *Images of America: Unicoi and Limestone Cove* (Arcadia Publishing, 2009).

This picture of Jennie Moore was taken in 1906 while she was serving the Rocky Fork community. Photo courtesy Unicoi County Historical Society.

A Civic and Patriotic Duty to Teach School in Sullivan County

Louise Bailey Dickson

In the midst of the Great Depression in the 1930s, World War II in the 1940s, and Appalachian poverty in the 1960s, Elizabeth Gammon Pendleton considered it her civic mission and patriotic duty to teach school and help families obtain food, clothing, and medicine.

Pendleton commented on her experience teaching school in the 1930s: "I taught the sixth grade. I taught all the subjects. [It] used to be you could just go to start school whenever you wanted to. If you didn't want to start until you were nine or ten [years old], you could, and I had some boys in my room that were almost as old as I was . . . But I never did [have any trouble with discipline]. The first time I walked down the hall they gave me the wolf whistle, but anyway I got along just fine with them."

The pay for teachers was eighty-five dollars a month, considered good compensation for the depression years. Pendleton called it "a big salary."

The Gammon family owned several farm properties but had lost their cash during the crash of the stock market and bank closings in 1929. Pendleton lived at home on the family farm and used her salary to repay a loan for her college education and to help pay property taxes.

During the 1940s, she recalled, "They didn't have teachers and they needed some teachers, so I took Dr. Sam Brown's [teaching position]. He had to go into service and I took his place, and he was teaching math at Miller Perry."

As World War II continued, pay for teachers dropped to an all-time low, while jobs in the factories were paying wages as much as $200 to $300 per month. But Pendleton felt that teaching at Miller Perry Elementary School was "just like a patriotic duty."

Teaching was her contribution to the community: "The county money was low, and I taught school for sixty-eight dollars a month, which was just like a

Elizabeth and her students, 1931-1932. Photo courtesy Louise Bailey Dickson.

charity job. We had a hard time getting teachers, and if a teacher was sick the other teachers that had a little free period, they tried to fill in because we couldn't get substitutes."

With the scarcity of car parts, gas, and rubber for tires, traveling to school was difficult. Pendleton and her husband, Paris, "bought a junky car" that she drove to school using gas ration cards.

Sullivan County occasionally fell short on revenue. "And then," Pendleton remembered, "sometimes they just gave you a due bill for your monthly salary. Then you had to wait until the county collected the taxes to pay you."

In the 1950s, Pendleton attended summer school and night school, traveling 20 miles to Johnson City after teaching school all day. "I just wanted to get my other degree," she said. "I had a permanent certificate. I really didn't have to go back to keep my certificate updated."

Although she had to pay for her own education, she did get a raise from the county school board when she earned the bachelor of science degree from East Tennessee State College (now University) in 1955.

In 1959, she completed her twenty-second year of teaching at Miller Perry and accepted the position of attendance supervisor for Sullivan County. The State of Tennessee had passed a law that children were required to attend school until age seventeen.

Pendleton viewed her supervisory position as both a profession and a personal mission to help students overcome their hardships and gain an education. With no government programs in place to assist lower-income families, she contacted local churches and civic organizations, requesting shoes, clothes, and food for families. She got help from the local VFW chapter, the Moose Club, and the Salvation Army. Shriners provided shoes. The Lions Club contributed eyeglasses. "And Mafair Methodist Church always kept a big wardrobe for girls, and the church would outfit the children nicely."

Looking back over a forty-year career of helping families through the Sullivan County School System, she said, "Any time that I ever went for a child and knocked on the door, I can't even remember any occasion when I was treated with discourtesy." ❖

Louise Bailey Dickson holds a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis and a master's degree with a focus in Appalachian Studies. She is an assistant professor of English & Humanities at Northeast State Community College.

Elizabeth Pendleton as a young teacher. Photo courtesy Louise Bailey Dickson.

A Labor of Love

Margaret Nava

Everyone in the hollow called her Granny. No first or last name—none were needed. We all knew who she was and where to find her.

Granny lived in the old Smithfield boarding house down the road and across the river from our farm. Rumor had it that the boarding house had once been a brothel but closed down around the time Prohibition was repealed. The house's tin roof was rusted, and several windows were patched with cardboard. Whatever color it had once been painted had turned a silvery gray. Surrounded by overgrown shrubs and weeds, the house was set back some from the river. There was a root cellar and pump house off to one side of the porch and a rickety paddock off to the other. A swayback mule with one upright and one floppy ear shared the paddock with an old brown cow whose only purpose in life seemed to be keeping the mule company.

Whenever Granny was needed, a child with strong legs or someone with a horse was sent racing through the hollow to get her. Most times, the messenger stopped short of the house, preferring to stay on the far side of the snaky river.

On clear days, Granny could been seen wading across the river with her apron held high and a pair of shoes slung over one shoulder. The bridge had been swept away in the flood of '55, but no one had ever replaced it. When she reached the opposite side of the river, Granny sat on the ground, pulled on three pairs of woolen socks, all heavily darned, and slipped her dead husband's World War II combat boots over them. Then she hoisted herself up, smoothed her floral print cotton dress and cobbler apron, and set off into the woods.

Spring was Granny's favorite season, when the fireweed, ginseng, and elderflower were at their finest. Without ever taking more than she needed, she gathered the tender shoots and blossoms of the plants, stuffed them into her apron pockets, and took them home to make her "remedies." The stems of fireweed were used to treat boils or cuts. Ginseng root could be used to relieve stress and anxiety. Elderflower blooms could help alleviate influenza and ward off evil influences. Whenever she found ramps or poke, she always harvested some. Ramps could be used as a spring "tonic," and poke, although considered

Granny lived in the old Smithfield boarding house down the road and across the river. Photo courtesy Margaret Nava.

poisonous, could ease the pain of tonsillitis and rashes. But her most valuable find was black cohosh.

Often reaching heights of eight feet, black cohosh, or squawroot, had been used for generations, to treat rheumatism, kidney stones, respiratory illnesses, and to prevent or cure snakebite. Granny's favored use was to encourage labor contractions.

Although she also treated coughs and set broken limbs, Granny's most important service to the community was delivering babies. As the only midwife within twenty miles, she was busy. Some people said she had delivered more than 3,000 babies.

Usually in the middle of the night, Granny would saddle up her mule, grab her black bag, and head out. When she got to the expectant mother's home, she checked on her patient and then prepared a hot, nourishing breakfast for the rest of the family as they awaited their new arrival. When the proper time came, she soaked her scissors and needles in alcohol, and gave the mother a large cup of squawroot tea.

If the mother was young, Granny sometimes tied her legs to the bedpost. If she had already given birth to other children, nature was allowed to take its course. When contractions began, Granny massaged the mother's stomach, helping coax the child into the birth canal. Speaking in soothing tones or softly singing lullabies, she calmed the mother until the baby's head appeared. Then, pushing with all their might, she and the mother brought another life into the world.

While I never had use for Granny's midwife services, I did have to seek her out when my husband shot his foot while squirrel hunting. He and a neighbor had gone looking for squirrels and took a jug along to keep warm. Tripping over a tree root, my husband dropped his rifle and shot his foot. The neighbor helped him hobble back to our farm but took off the moment he spotted me. Not knowing what else to do, I called another neighbor, who suggested I run down the road and get Granny.

Having heard all the stories about snakes, I stayed on the far side of the river and shouted as loud as I could. Within seconds, the old woman appeared on her porch, asking what all the "hootin' an hollerin'" was about. When I explained that my husband had been shot, she reached inside the house, grabbed her bag, and sprinted across the river without ever removing her shoes. Then, tugging at my arm, she quickly led the way to our farm.

A trail of blood led to the back porch steps where my husband sat wailing and moaning as if his life were ending. Without as much as a "please" or "howdy," Granny pulled a curved- blade hunting knife from her bag and ripped through his shoe and sock. Then, inspecting the wounded foot, she began laughing: "Why, it's jist a nick, hardly worth worrin' about."

A couple of months later, we got word that Granny had died. Following a small funeral and burial in her family cemetery on top of the ridge, two neighbor ladies and I braved the river to pack up Granny's house. Inside, we found a few pieces of furniture, a couple of tattered quilts, a pile of old clothes, several shelves lined with brown bottles, and bunches of dried plants and flowers hanging from the rafters. Lining the walls were pictures of children she had probably delivered, a picture of her in a wedding dress, and one of her husband in his Army uniform. Off in one corner, a well-worn, leather-bound Bible sat on top of a lopsided chest. It was open to the Book of John, Chapter 13. Verse 34 had been underlined in red: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Even though I never knew her first or last name, I understood that this verse had been the blueprint for Granny's life. With her black bag and "remedies," she had given love and received it in return. ❖

Margaret Nava is a regular contributor to *Now & Then*. She is the author of two New Mexico travel guides and three "Lady-Lit" novels about life and love in the twilight years.

Eloise

Fred Sauceman

Tuesday mornings at 9 a.m. sharp, Eloise Swain tees off at Pine Oaks Golf Course in Johnson City, Tennessee. Friday nights she presides over karaoke at her family's neighborhood bar, The Cottage. Eloise turned eighty-five years old on September 16, 2011.

Her long and active life has ranged from the sugar plantations of her native Hawaii to the bingo halls of southwest Virginia. Whether answering the telephone at the Bank of Hawaii or learning to fry milk-soaked chicken and hefty cheeseburgers in The Cottage's kitchen, she has always worn a flower in her hair. It's part of her go-to-work attire and a remembrance of life on the islands.

Most Friday nights at The Cottage, you'll find her in a muumuu. She has a closet full. And on one particular Friday night every year, a muumuu is mandatory. It's the Friday in June that falls closest to the birthday of King Kamehameha, who united the Hawaiian islands. The Cottage karaoke party ramps up that night, often spilling out into the parking lot.

The party reminds Eloise of her days as a schoolgirl back on the "big island" of Hawaii when hula competitions were held in the schools, in memory of the king, "the Napoleon of the Pacific," who died in 1819.

All the old dance moves come back to her on this special Friday night—the flowing arms, the graceful fingers, the gently swaying hips, all telling a story.

Amid the raucousness of beer-fueled karaoke, when Eloise steps out from behind the bar and Theresa Greer cues up "Lovely Hula Hands," The Cottage crowd gets totally quiet. For three minutes, Eloise, smiling broadly and lithe as a teenager, is the center of attention.

With pineapples as door prizes and leis around every neck, for one night, this bar in the uplands of East Tennessee turns tropical. Although the owners of The Cottage love the mountains and, as Eloise says, love "being able to drive from one state to another," Hawaii is never far from their minds. Eloise's sister, the late Ellenmerle Heigis, owned the bar for many years with her husband, Don. When Ellenmerle died in late 2010, the family requested that visitors to the funeral home wear Hawaiian shirts, and the funeral parlor was a festival of flowers.

Eloise's first job in Hawaii was driving a tractor between rows of sugar cane at the Hutchinson Sugar

Eloise Swain dances the hula during the 2011 King Kamehameha birthday party at The Cottage. Photo by Fred Sauceman.

Plantation, where her father, Louis, supervised the tractor drivers and her mother, Rose, made clothes. During World War II, schools were closed on Fridays so students could work in the cane fields.

Eloise later took a job in wholesale-retail, then went to work as a switchboard operator for the Bank of Hawaii. On a dare, she accepted a job at the Seven Seas restaurant in Hilo. That led to a position as a bar manager at a place in Hilo she describes as "like The Cottage but with pool tables and liquor."

In 1981, after a divorce, Eloise left Hawaii for the mainland, and thus began her love affair with the mountains of East Tennessee and her ongoing love affair with customers at The Cottage. Along the way, her family came to include two children, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. Her sister Ermine Lehua Martin still lives in Honolulu, and Eloise flies there, she says, "whenever my feet say 'let's go.'" She says the sugar plantations of her youth are gone, though, replaced by the macadamia nut industry.

Holidays at the Heiges house in Johnson City are celebrated around a black iron skillet full of Eloise's fried rice, a dish treasured by her niece and nephew, Patti and Sonny Heiges, who inherited The Cottage from their parents. Her teriyaki chicken and kimchee are legendary around Johnson City, too. Many mornings, Eloise will fry up a slice of Spam to go with her eggs, like she did back in Hawaii.

The family tree of Eloise Swain is populated by a number of soldiers. Her oldest brother, Wesley Swain, was wounded in the Philippines during World War II and died on the operating table. Her brother Benjamin went missing in action during the Korean War and was never found. Her brother-in-law, Don, spent thirty years as a Marine Corps staff sergeant before taking ownership of The Cottage. He had staffed an NCO Club in Okinawa and met his future wife, Ellenmerle, a nurse, at a USO party in Hawaii. Opening a place like The Cottage was Don's dream.

Just as her brother-in-law did, Eloise immediately associates a face with a beer brand. Customers rarely have to say a word on Friday nights, as their Budweisers and Millers are served up before elbows touch the bar.

It takes a good memory to tend bar. Eloise says it takes patience, too. She tolerates all gradations of karaoke ability and decibel levels with her ever-present smile.

As for her once-a-year hula performances, she tells me, "When my legs say 'no, no,' I'll stop."

Around her neck, Eloise wears a dark necklace. It's made of kukui nuts. The symbolism is fitting. Oil from the nuts was used for lamplight on the Hawaiian islands. Kukui, Eloise explains, means "light." It's something she brings into the lives of her family and friends every day. ❖

Fred Sauceman is the author of *The Place Setting*, a three-volume series on the foodways of Appalachia.

Eloise (left) and her sister Lehua, early 1940s. Photos courtesy Eloise Swain.

Adrienne Belafonte Biesemeyer: Weaver, Social Activist, Dancer

Carter Taylor Seaton

Sitting in her office in downtown Lewisburg, Adrienne Biesemeyer flashes a broad grin when asked how she—Harry Belafonte's eldest daughter—landed in West Virginia. It's then you notice her father's features—the thousand-watt smile, the dancing black eyes, the hint of a widow's peak, and even the touches of gray creeping around the edges of the close-cropped hair. She's a fascinating mix of talents and interests—some, not surprisingly, nurtured by the activism of her famous father. Now she, too, is a social activist and the Executive Director of Project to Project, a non-profit organization that works primarily in South Africa, Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho, Madagascar, and Malawi. It does a broad range of things: from taking interns to southern Africa to do HIV-AIDS education or conflict resolution, to helping preserve the cultural heritage of a region, to working with children in the arts, to offering history courses for universities. But she's also been a weaver, a dance company organizer, and a licensed professional counselor.

Her adventurous nature brought her to West Virginia. After graduating from a progressive Massachusetts high school in 1967, she tramped around Europe for a while and studied textiles in Holland until her parents decided their wandering child needed to settle down. When her uncle Charles Byrd—then a media professor at West Virginia State College—encouraged her to come there, she agreed, although she intended to stay only one semester and then go back east to pursue her love of art. Instead, after arriving in January 1968, Adrienne stayed; it turned out to be a fortuitous decision.

Born in Washington, D.C., but raised for her first thirteen years in New York City and Long Island, Adrienne was exposed to art from an early age. Fine art filled her home; her step-mother, Julie Robinson, was a dancer; and museums were her urban playgrounds. While dance was Adrienne's first love, she studied weaving in high school and then broadened her interests in college, receiving a BFA from West Virginia State College.

One day, two strangers visited a class Adrienne was taking. Their friend John Nickerson, then a noted glass blower at Blenko Glass in Milton, West Virginia, was demonstrating pottery. The two were David Biesemeyer and his buddy, Dick Pranulis. Although David was supervising a group of Appalachian volunteers working on a Head Start project and Dick was designing housing for the elderly, both wanted to learn about pottery.

Adrienne Belafonte Biesemeyer. Photo courtesy Carter Taylor Seaton.

"I just flipped out over him," Adrienne recalls of David, now her husband of over thirty years. She says their politics and values are similar. He had been a Peace Corps Volunteer who headed the first group to work in the Cameroons. Born in Missouri and raised in Iowa, David had graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a law degree before coming to West Virginia as an Appalachian volunteer. Now he is a regional manager for the United Mine Workers Health and Retirement Fund, helping miners obtain health cards and pensions. And although he's white and she's black, Adrienne says she's never run into any overt discrimination in West Virginia. It's one of the things she loves about the state.

After completing her degree at West Virginia State College, Adrienne attended graduate school in Pueblo, Mexico, at the Universitas las Americas where she studied art, archeology, and textiles. She turned to dance to support herself, working in the dance studio at the university. David's initial glow didn't fade while Adrienne was away, however, and the couple married in Mexico after she finished her degree.

When discussing where to live, the newlyweds decided to return to West Virginia because they loved its beauty and because it was cheaper than New England, a place they also loved. At first they lived at Pliny in Mason County where David was a rural mail carrier and Adrienne broadcast the weekend weather for WCHS-TV in Charleston. Together the pair made about $2,000 a year and subsisted on their small farm. After one stop in Whitesville, they rented a tiny cabin in White Oak. They had just started building a home in White Oak when Adrienne became pregnant.

"The house was under roof and just about finished, but not all the rooms were in," she said. "I told my husband that I was not going to bring this baby home to the little cabin we were staying in. As a good back-to-the-lander, I wanted to be in my own house. He went off to work in the morning and I had our friends come over and pack the house. When he got home in the afternoon, he went, 'Whoa, wait a minute.' I had moved." He followed, and eventually, they discovered the Monroe County side of Alderson in the Greenbrier Valley and put down roots.

Once settled in their new home with baby Rachel in tow, Adrienne began weaving full-time. She bought a counterbalanced, four-harness loom for $250, which seemed like $2,000 because of their meager income, but David insisted she make the purchase. At first she specialized in home accessories such as pillows and rugs, using all-natural fibers: cotton, wool, and goat hair. Designing the work was the part she loved best. Initially she used lots of whites and beiges in her weaving, forming rich, intricate patterns.

She sold at craft fairs, including the Mountain State Art & Craft Fair for two years. However, when a child with a dripping chocolate ice cream cone began touching her nice fuzzy work, she began to rethink those venues. Soon her work morphed into art wearables, sold through trunk shows at tony West Virginia women's shops like Schwabe-May in Charleston. She also sold her shawls of alpaca and mohair through word of mouth. The Cultural Center Shop, a precursor to West Virginia's Tamarack, also carried Adrienne's weaving.

"David used to do all the knotting at the end unless I was doing something really intricate," she recalls. "If I put beads on them, that was my job; but if it was just a regular knot, a little macramé finish, he would do that, finish the knots."

When she tired of weaving in the early 1980s, Adrienne finished a master's degree in counseling at West Virginia Graduate College/Marshall University. Until 2006, she had a private counseling practice in Lewisburg focusing on children and their families. She also worked as a learning specialist at the West Virginia Osteopathic School in Lewisburg, but the "I can't sit still" gene kicked in again and she formed the project she now heads.

The Biesemeyers live on a forty-nine-acre piece of property her dad calls "Shangri-la," but even though he visits regularly, "It's too "Shangri-la for him," she says. "He is really cosmopolitan. He loves to visit, but he's gotta get back."

Not so for Adrienne, who wonders how people live in those urban areas she used to roam. When friends back east suggest to her that she's isolated, she reminds them that we are now blessed with computers and cell phones, and that airports are close enough to accommodate travel to most anywhere. She tells them, "The difference is, you have forty-two locks and a security program on your house, and I don't. If I get out of the car and forget my keys in Lewisburg, I don't panic and have to go running back to the car. I realize 'Oh, they're in the car, it's okay.'"

West Virginia life has been enriched by Adrienne's presence, although she demurs at that thought. She will tell you that her biggest gift to the state had nothing to

do with weaving. From 1988 until 2005, she headed the Alderson Dance Ensemble, which gave 150 children, junior high age and up, the opportunity to learn to dance and to perform, at no charge for the lessons. The troupe performed in North Carolina and all over West Virginia. Former students tell her the dance company was the best thing that ever happened to them.

Even if Adrienne Belafonte Biesemeyer's life takes another turn, she says she'll always be a West Virginian. "On the back of the *Greenbrier Valley* magazine is a picture, a foggy picture of the Greenbrier and all these trees . . . and it says, '*There really is an enchanted forest.*' I thought that was a great thing, but as a whole it is wild and it is wonderful. I'm glad to be in West Virginia." ❖

Carter Taylor Seaton is a freelance writer living in Huntington, West Virginia.

Heir

E. Gail Chandler

I buy a groundhog and possum trap,
a hundred feet of six mil plastic
and apologize to the just-grown man
loading my pickup.

Yesterday he fetched five huge handrails
and I checked the price, then chickened out.
It's my job, he says, grinning, his speech
Cumberland highlands and coal dust.

I thank ye, I say and slide into my dusty truck.
The rain has stopped this first day of March.
On the hillside a touch of pink,
faint as pretend, cuts the gray.

Downtown Manchester, I park by a pothole,
study a boarded building, a plumbers' supply
needing paint, the new library,
all back-dropped by mountains
I've denied for a lifetime.

My address is miles from here
so I can't be sure if it's the work,
the sunshine on my face
or the nearness of the family graveyard,
but this day I know
that I am home.

E. Gail Chandler retired from Kentucky Corrections. She has published two books, *Sunflowers on Market Street* and *Where the Red Road Meets the Sky*.

Jenny Carnell: Born to Serve

Dolly Withrow

"Joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service, and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness." —Leo Tolstoy

Occasionally, the band uniforms are brought to Jenny Carnell's house, but sometimes the seventy-nine-year-old woman drives twenty miles to Ripley High School to get the ones that need to be altered. For years, she has been a seamstress for the high school band, touted as the pride of Jackson County, West Virginia. As Jenny, her son Jay, and I talked in her living room, she told me that the previous year she had twenty-six pairs of the band's white pants that needed to be either shortened or lengthened.

Smiling, Jenny said, "You know I can't cut the pants off because a taller student might wear the same pants the next year, so I just turn them up and sew."

I asked if she was well paid for her work, and she said, "Oh, no. I never charge anything. God gave me the talent to do the things I do, and if I charged, God might take it away. I am here to help others."

Jay said, "It would be impossible to count all the prayer shawls, baby blankets, quilts, caps, and booties Mom has made and given away. I expect every baby born in this community has received one of Mom's afghans. She always has several projects going at one time. She also makes bibs for the local nursing home."

Jenny sews, crochets, quilts, cooks, and cares. When her late mother-in-law, Little Mamaw, had been blinded by glaucoma, Jenny was there for her. Jenny said it was then she learned if one of the senses was destroyed, the others would take up the slack.

"When Little Mamaw heard me or my husband start our car engine, she knew which one of us was behind the wheel," Jenny said. "Isn't that amazing? She could also run her fingers over a table and know if it had a fine coating of dust."

When I asked Jenny about her saddest experiences while serving others, she said, "Sitting all night with sick people, especially when they were suffering. That's really hard because I feel so helpless." She began helping those in need when she was a teenager. As a midwife, her mother had set an example, for she also gave away her talents.

Jenny Carnell in the kitchen of Fisher Memorial Church, where she is a member. Photo courtesy James Carnell.

Saying she doesn't feel old, Jenny is still young at seventy-nine. She has a quick step, a keen mind, and a ready smile. Recently she climbed a ladder to help a friend whitewash a building. At a church picnic, she was one of the first to crawl inside the Jupiter Jump. As Jenny and youngsters jumped up and down, Jenny broke her knee. Still, I think she would give the Jupiter Jump another try.

"To avoid surgery," she said, "I had to stay flat of my back for five weeks. That was the most difficult thing I've done, but I crocheted."

Jenny has been widowed for fourteen years. Her marriage to the late Harold Carnell produced a daughter, Sharon, and two sons, Steve and Jay. They all lead productive, well-adjusted lives. Jenny will quickly tell you how proud she is of her children and grandchildren. She says she is blessed by being surrounded by love.

Many years ago when Jenny was learning how to make chow-chow, I was learning how to cha-cha. Since then, no one has asked me to cha-cha, but through the years, Jenny has perfected the making of chow-chow into an art form, and many people have enjoyed her special recipe. My husband and I have been the recipients of her generosity. When she heard my husband say he would give a hundred dollars for a jar of Jenny's chow-chow, she brought a jar for him, saying it was a gift of love. She also hemmed a long gown I was going to wear to my high school reunion. She would not accept payment. ❖

Jenny Carnell's Chunky Zucchini Relish (aka Chow-Chow)

3 cups zucchini, diced (peeling and all)
3 cups yellow squash or patty pan or pie squash, diced (peeling and all)
3 cups carrots, diced
4 cups onions, diced
1 cup celery, diced
2 cups green pepper, diced
3 cups cabbage or cauliflower, diced

Place all vegetables in a pan with ¼ cup coarse salt (no water) and mix with hands. Let this sit for 3 hours.

In a large pan, add the following:

2 cups vinegar
4 cups sugar
2 teaspoons celery seed
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon pickling spice
½ teaspoon mustard seed

Bring vinegar to a boil, stirring until spices are dissolved. Add vegetables to vinegar mixture and bring to a boil again. Put the mixture into sterilized jars and seal. Makes 6 to 7 pints.

Dolly Withrow is a retired English professor and the author of four books.

Exotic Dancing and the Odds for a Happily Ever After

Edwina Pendarvis

Lady Godiva's Gentleman's Club in Barboursville, West Virginia, shuts down in the daytime. Even at night, lively though the place is, it looks a little fusty and old-fashioned, with hand-painted knights on either side of the front door. The life-size, plastic-looking statue of a white horse that used to stand in the parking lot is gone now. This club is one of a half-dozen or so gentleman's clubs in the area. They open for awhile and then close down, to be replaced by other bars serving up drinks and exotic dancing. Whatever these controversial establishments mean to others, they remind me—Lady Godiva's especially, with its knights-and-ladies theme—of why I'm so sick of the princess fad. Disney princesses, Barbie princesses, princess costumes, and clothing with "Princess" written on them are products of an industry I hope is winding down.

I know parents don't mean any harm when they proclaim their daughters' princesshood, buy them tiaras, and deck them out in princess clothing. Telling girls they're princesses is a way of saying, "You're precious to me." But so *much* attention to princess fantasies may suggest to little girls from better-off families that privilege is their due, and that it's just too bad about those other, *less* precious, girls—including girls who may grow up to find jobs like exotic dancing their best bet for making a decent living.

Not that exotic dancing rules out chances for a "happily ever after." Lots of successful women have made a living that way for a time. Popular actress Goldie Hawn is one example. And, in fact, one of West Virginia's most famous "Cinderella" tales is the life story of Fannie Belle Fleming, better known as Blaze Starr.

Born in 1932 near Twelve Pole Creek in Wayne County, Blaze Starr parlayed her good looks and audacity into national celebrity and a lot more money than she could've made waitressing at places like the bar and grill where she began work at fourteen. At sixteen, she left home to find a better job. She ended up in Washington, D.C., where she worked in a donut shop until a nightclub owner recruited her for his burlesque show. By the time she was seventeen, she'd moved to

Entrance to Lady Godiva's Gentleman's Club. Photo courtesy Edwina Pendarvis.

Baltimore and was performing at the Two O'Clock Club, a nightclub she made famous and, years later, owned.

In her autobiography, Starr says she wanted to be in show business like her cousin, Molly O'Day, a popular country singer. She wanted her parents to be able to brag about her: "I went out and bought myself a pair of high heels and in the privacy of my little room I practiced bumps and grinds night after night. . . . I wanted to become a star, and stripping looked like my best opportunity."

At first she didn't tell her parents she was a stripper. She said she did "exotic dancing." Back then, the term was used for traditional belly dancing and dramatic dancing, as well as for striptease performances. Today it covers go-go dancing, table dancing, pole dancing, and lap dancing.

The bright, pretty, and curvaceous Blaze Starr was a smash hit. An *Esquire* reporter who featured her in an article on Baltimore's strip clubs for the February 1954 issue of the "magazine for men" described her this way:

> A redhead, Blaze Starr, is one of the current sensations. She is as healthy and rounded as a peach just off the bough, and her sinuous and sophisticated writhings don't fool the boys a bit. They know that under that fresh and plump skin she is really the girl next door, putting on an act while the folks are away. . . . Blaze is the prize of Baltimore.

Starr got attention from the media again when flamboyant (and married) Louisiana Governor Earl Long caught her act at the Sho-Bar in New Orleans and apparently fell in love with her. Their notorious affair helped her career as a stripper considerably more than it helped his as governor, but he left her $50,000 in his will. She didn't accept the money—too many people had accused her of caring more about Long's money than about the man himself.

I've never seen Starr in person; the closest I've come was seeing *Blaze*, the movie about her life. She has a cameo role and two words, "Hello, Governor," spoken to actor Paul Newman.

I've only known two exotic dancers in real life. One is my sister Margie. But her dancing wasn't nearly as exotic as Starr's, and her exotic dancing career lasted just a few weeks.

When Margie was six and I was eight, our family moved from Wharton, West Virginia, to Pikeville, Kentucky. Mother took us right away to sign up for ballet lessons. By this time, we'd worn out several crepe-paper tutus she'd made so we could "p'like" (play like) we were ballerinas. Ballerinas were *our* favorite "princesses," but the coal towns we lived in before we moved to Pikeville didn't have dancing schools.

We took ballet together for awhile, then I dropped out. Margie never considered quitting. She was eleven when we moved to Orlando, Florida, where she spent every afternoon, after school, in the ballet studio. Six years later, a talent scout from the School of American Ballet in New York chose her for a summer scholarship. As soon as she graduated from high school, she headed for New York City.

That summer of 1964, Margie and her friend, Janet, another ballet student, explored Manhattan. By August, they'd found an apartment together, and as soon as summer dance classes ended, they looked for work. Armed with high-school shorthand, Margie got a job as secretary to Bonwit Teller's credit manager. She liked the job, but the day she turned eighteen, she and Janet auditioned to be go-go dancers at a classy discotheque in midtown Manhattan. The owner of The Ginza and his manager, a Japanese woman called "Mama-san," decided that the two girls would do nicely. They could start right away, dancing from noon to seven for the lunch and cocktail crowds.

A little apprehensive about dancing in a suspended cage in a nightclub, Margie decided she'd take the job if Janet did. After all, she told herself, it wasn't a sleazy place, and she wouldn't be dancing at night. Besides, it paid twice as much as her job at Bonwit's. The costumes for the dancers weren't so *very* abbreviated, and the go-go boots were cute.

She and Janet ponied, twisted, mash-potatoed, and Watusied to hits like "Hey, You, Get Offa My Cloud." In time with the beat, they jumped from one platform to another. Customers enjoyed their act, and the two girls took pride in their status as the youngest dancers at the discotheque. The Asian kitchen staff looked after them, pampering them with food and attention during their breaks.

Pleasant as it was, Margie knew go-go dancing didn't offer much chance for promotion. She went on to better jobs and, trained in ballet, finally ended

up at the place she'd come to New York to be part of, the American School of Ballet. There she planned programs, coordinated ballet workshops, and went on cross-country audition tours, like the one in 1964 when she'd been selected for a summer scholarship. She's lived what many women would consider a fairy-tale life, even if it wasn't movie material.

If exotic dancing worked out for Blaze Starr and for my own sister, why my peevishness about princesses? Because only one in a blue million exotic dancers could earn the fame that Blaze Starr achieved. And because, in today's economy, not many women can take up exotic dancing as a lark, as Margie did, and then move on to more secure, better-paying jobs. The rich few are richer and fewer now, and the poor masses are more . . . massive. Wealth disparity is greater than ever before. According to the 2010 census, four southeastern Kentucky counties are among the ten poorest in the country. More girls are growing up in families there and in other Appalachian counties today without enough money for even modest luxuries, like the ballet lessons my sister and I took when we lived in Pikeville. A lot of young women consider themselves lucky to earn enough money to subsist by doing exotic dancing, but their work isn't likely to be at a fancy discotheque with friendly kitchen staff. These days, here in Appalachia and elsewhere, seedy bars offering lap dances proliferate off interstate exit ramps and along streets in almost every city and town. They're the best venues some women can look forward to.

A friend tells me exotic dancing's a cushy job for women who can't or won't go to college. Cushy compared to *what* is the question. Nightclub owners often hire exotic dancers as independent contractors and don't pay into their Social Security, much less pay toward their health insurance or offer sick leave. Dancers may have to earn a quota toward club expenses—tips for bouncers, for example. In some clubs, the dancers are fined for being late, for calling in sick, or for "talking back" to customers. Exotic dancers are vulnerable to rudeness, ridicule, and violence. And abuse isn't new to many of them. Statistics vary, but studies say somewhere between sixty and ninety percent of the dancers were abused as children. Not many are celebrated by the media or have a governor fall for them. They're much more likely to have a life like Teresa's.

Teresa is the only other exotic dancer I know. She rented a trailer out in the country from me a couple of years ago. She liked it there and kept the place neat,

A friend tells me exotic dancing's a cushy job for women who can't or won't go to college. Cushy compared to *what* is the question.

repainted every room, and furnished the whole thing simply and prettily. She had a little baby, two or three months old, and a husband or boyfriend who didn't appear to help pay the rent. When she and I first met, she told me she worked at the Gentleman's Club in Huntington and hoped I wouldn't refuse to rent to her because of that. She always handed me the rent in cash.

Teresa reminds me of my sister a little. Smart, capable, and pretty—slender but strong looking, with shoulder-length brown hair, brown eyes, and a scattering of freckles across her nose and cheekbones.

She liked the low rent and the big, fenced-in yard with hills and pastures all around. She loved how quiet the place was. But she stayed there less than six months. She couldn't keep her old car running well enough to be sure of getting to town and back. When her car broke down a couple of miles from the trailer one day, and she had to walk home carrying the baby, not a soul offered her a lift. Another time, the car wouldn't start when she got off work, and she had to take a cab home. Fifty or sixty dollars, I'd guess. Maybe it was unrealistic of her to move out of town in the first place, but she'd hoped to manage it. Despite her "cushy job," she couldn't afford to live in a cheap, single-wide trailer in the country.

The last time I saw Teresa she was just getting off work and looked worn out. It was about ten in the morning, and she had on stage makeup. In an economy so harsh that her job is cushy compared to the jobs some people have to take on and still not earn a decent wage, extolling little princesses and spending literally billions of dollars a year for princess toys and costumes isn't just innocent play. It's an insult to poor girls and women. Maybe there'll come a time when every girl is treated as precious, a time when every girl has a fair chance for health and happiness. But that's not the way things are now or in the foreseeable future. ❖

Edwina Pendarvis is book reviews editor for *Now & Then*.

The Shepherd of the Hills

Sarah Thomas

Children run, laugh, and play on the semi-circle of lawn separating the R. P. Smith Administration Building from four homey cottages. A visitor who missed the entrance sign might think he had stumbled on a closely-knit community heavily populated with children. But each child here has a story—often a story of abuse, abandonment, and neglect.

Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth & Families near Asheville, North Carolina, has a rich heritage reaching back more than a hundred years. The ministry today serves upwards of fifty at-risk children each year. But without the vision of Reverend Robert Perry Smith, thousands of children would have had to look elsewhere for help and support.

In the late 1800s, Reverend Smith came to the mountains of western North Carolina where he discovered a multitude of abandoned and orphaned children struggling to survive. Within a few short years he earned the name "Shepherd of the Hills" for his efforts to provide those Appalachian orphans with a safe, secure home.

Smith first came to the area as a pastor and was soon named superintendent of the newly formed Asheville Presbytery in 1898. His dedication to building a church presence in rural areas required him to travel into the far reaches of the region, carrying the word of God to any who would listen. R. F. Campbell, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Asheville in the 1930s, once said of Smith, "He traveled through the valleys and over the mountains and far back into the coves, by all sorts of transportation, in buggies, in wagons, on horseback and mule back, with or without saddle, and often on foot."

During those travels, Smith discovered children—either orphaned or abandoned—trying to eke out an existence on hardscrabble homesteads. In response to their overwhelming need, he opened the doors of Mountain Orphanage, a four-room cottage in Haywood

R.P. Smith gathers his children around him under an arbor outside the newly constructed Mountain Orphanage in Black Mountain, North Carolina, in the early 1920s. Photo from Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth & Families archives.

County, North Carolina, on January 19, 1904.

Smith, who had been orphaned at twelve, began his ministry with just six children and a housemother. He and a local teacher, Lucy Smith Hare, rode out on horseback to find orphaned children and bring them to the cottage. Hare later wrote, "Dr. Smith told me I must, 'Get a gentle nag and ride in the hills and get the children to come to my school.' I did so and never feared to go into the wooded parts."

The Asheville Presbytery assisted the operation of the orphanage with twenty dollars a month—ten for the housemother's salary and ten to meet the needs of the children. The first individual donation was given in April 1904 by Hazel Johnson. A child herself, she gave Smith thirteen pennies to support his work. Within five years the small orphanage was overflowing with fourteen children. Many more had been placed on a waiting list. It was time to expand.

In 1910 Smith moved Mountain Orphanage to the Balfour/Hendersonville area. In the December 1910 issue of *Our Mountain Work*, a publication of the Asheville Presbytery, the Reverend and Mrs. A. H. Temple wrote about the work going on at the orphanage under their care: "The Mountain Orphanage is doing a work that has been sorely neglected heretofore. A few persons seeing the great need commenced this enterprise in a quiet, modest way. It has made friends and is steadily growing in efficiency."

After the orphanage had been in operation for eight years, Smith described his vision in *Our Mountain Work*: "The purpose of the Home is to be pre-eminently a HOME, their HOME. The manager, the Reverend A.H. Temple and Mrs. Temple, the matron, live in the building with the children and give their entire time to them. The plan is to give primary training in school causes and domestic work to fit them for becoming self-supporting and self-sufficient. They are taught bookkeeping, laundering, poultry raising, trucking, canning fruits, etc."

Over the course of the next ten years, Mountain Orphanage began accepting "half-orphans"—children who had one parent living, with that parent being unable or unwilling to care for the child. Again, the orphanage was bursting at the seams. A committee of the Presbytery began looking for a third site. In 1922, the committee purchased a 135-acre tract of land near Black Mountain—the current site of Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth & Families—and began constructing a fireproof building. In 1923, a sprawling brick orphanage set on a knoll overlooking the mountains was opened.

Although daily operations at the home had been turned over to a series of superintendents, Smith continued to serve in a leadership role. In 1927, at age seventy-six, he was involved in a serious automobile accident while on his way to install new workers at the home. But he recovered quickly and continued to be active until his death nearly ten years later.

Following his death, *Asheville Times* editor Charles K. Robinson wrote a tribute that included the following: "We all feel today the incapacity of words to describe his extraordinary personality, a personality at once marked by rugged strength and unusual gentleness. . . . And so he became a father to the fatherless of this mountain territory, without any feeling of doing a task, because it was a labor of love. . . . Hundreds of children today, therefore, will call him blessed."

Many of the children at the home did call him "father." Shortly before Smith's death, one child wrote in a letter, "Every now and then someone asks me who I am and where I come from. I'm so glad that I have your permission to tell them that I'm one of your children."

Smith's legacy continues today at Black Mountain Home. Children from birth through college graduation who have nowhere else to turn find a loving, Christian home led by staff who are committed to carrying on Smith's good work.

"Reverend Smith began a wonderful ministry more than a hundred years ago that we're honored to carry on into the next century," said current Black Mountain Home President Tom Campbell. "Christ has always been at the center of everything we do here at the home, and I believe that's why we've seen such success and have been blessed with the opportunity to help so many children." ❖

Sarah Thomas is a native of French Creek, West Virginia, and is now director of finance, development and public relations for Black Mountain Home for Children, Youth & Families in Western North Carolina.

The Old Wooden Phone

Margaret Nava

When I was growing up in the 1940s, my parents stressed the importance of cutting corners, pinching pennies, and making do. Mom used beet juice to tint her lips and an eyebrow pencil to draw lines down the back of her legs whenever she and Dad went visiting. Dad saved the silvery inner wrappings from his Lucky Strike cigarette packs to make Christmas ornaments and planted a victory garden in my grandparents' backyard. My brother and I shared a bath and bar of lye soap every Saturday night, whether we wanted to or not. Clothes were handed down from one generation to the next; Saturday night entertainment was gathering around our Crosley console radio; and even if they owned one, hardly anyone drove a car. Everyone pulled together to save valuable resources for the war effort. Even though the lessons of those days taught me to be thrifty in later life, they didn't prepare me for life in the hollows of West Virginia.

Take, for instance, telephones. Back in the Midwest where I grew up, every home had at least one. Some were cute little pink, yellow, or baby-blue numbers with light-up rotary dials; others were ugly black monstrosities that doubled as gigantic paperweights. All of them, however, were what I considered standard issue household appliances. So when my husband and I moved to a farm along the Pocatalico River in the late '70s, I was amazed to find an old wooden telephone hanging on the kitchen wall. We had purchased the farm to "get back to basics," but this antiquated contraption took things to the extreme.

It was solid oak with a metal mouth horn, a coal-black receiver on one side and a hand crank on the other. There were no dials or buttons. As far as I could tell, it was just one short step above two tin cans and a string. My husband said the phone made use of something called a magneto system. Neither understanding what that meant nor how such a system worked, I decided to find out the age of the phone and why it had never been replaced.

One of our neighbors, who had lived in the hollow for most of her sixty-some years, said she was about five years old when her parents got their first telephone. "When the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company of West Virginia began operation in 1917, company officials ran into a problem—how to provide service to potential customers living in remote areas," she said. "Because homes were so few and far between, running telephone cable to individual customers would have been costly and, because of the steep terrain,

The old wooden phone was one step above two tin cans and a string. Photo courtesy Margaret Nava.

frequent flooding, and heavy snowfall here in the hollows, maintenance would have been difficult. So those parsimonious gentlemen put their heads together and decided that the most logical solution would be to connect us hill folk together by means of a shared service or what they called a party line."

She went on to explain that subscribers were looped together on one line of up to a dozen or more homes. Each subscriber on the line was assigned a unique ring—so many long and so many short rings. When you wanted to place a call to someone else on your line, you twisted the hand crank on the side to correspond to that person's "ring." If you wanted to call someone on another line, you went through the "central exchange" operator who "rang up" whomever you wished to speak with. Evidently, the system worked so well that the previous owners of our farm, and those before them, had never seen any reason to replace it.

After two months of trying to differentiate one ring from another, I gave up and started answering the phone whenever it rang. Sometimes it was for me; other times I just listened in. At first I worried that my neighbors might object to my covert action, but then I realized they were doing the same thing. Katie down the road said, "We all do it, hon." And Gelah up on the ridge told me, "Sometimes that's the only way we find out what's going on around here."

She was right. That telephone was like a daily newspaper. Depending on the time of day, you could pick it up and find out who had come home late the night before, what the weather was going to be like, when and where the next Tupperware party was going to be, and why the school bus would be running late. You could catch up on the latest episode of your favorite soap opera, get advice about eradicating squash bugs and hornworms, or just gossip about people who weren't listening in. But the party line also served a very important security function.

One afternoon as Sharon, Katie, and I were discussing the pros and cons of using liquid laundry soap instead of powder, one of our neighbors interrupted, pleading for help. "My son drove the tractor down to the mailboxes two hours ago and hasn't come home yet. Has anyone seen him?" Sharon was able to put the worried mother's mind to rest. "Oh, don't worry about him. He's here drinking iced tea with my daughters."

But there were other times that didn't turn out quite as well. Like the time old man Phillips had a heart attack or when the Watsons' barn caught fire. In situations like that, everyone knew what to do: hang up and go help.

By the late '80s, the party line system was replaced with private lines and modern telephones. Even so, I kept that old wooden phone hanging right there on the kitchen wall where I first found it. Archaic as it was, it had been a source of communication, entertainment, and security for me.

Mom and Dad would have approved. ❖

And Speaking of Service Lines...

Serving up Power and Light

At an elevation of 2,400 feet, Mountain City, Tennessee, sits in one of the highest valleys in the state of Tennessee. Doe Mountain rises to the southwest, Forge Mountain rises to the east, and a series of rugged hills (part of the Iron Mountains) dominates the landscape to the north. The Tennessee-North Carolina line runs opposite Forge Mountain approximately 5 miles east of Mountain City, and the Tennessee-Virginia line passes about 10 miles to the north. Serving a population of somewhere around 2,500 people, there are twenty churches (mostly Baptist), eighteen restaurants, nine grocery stores, six schools, and an historic music hall that serves as the venue for everything from Broadway musicals to bluegrass. People come here to visit museums, hike craggy peaks, buy antiques, fish the creeks, play golf, and listen to traditional country music. But perhaps the thing that most attracts people to this area is its history.

Initially part of Carter County, Johnson County was established in 1836 with Taylorsville being designated as the county seat. In 1885, the name of Taylorsville was changed when Roderick R. Butler, a prominent citizen and U.S. Congressman, suggested "Mountain City" might better represent the town's lofty setting.

Prior to 1927, many small companies, such as Watauga Power Company, Butler Light and Power, and Roan's Creek Light and Power, had formed to serve local communities with electricity. Since most of the dams used in generating electricity were small, generators could not run full time and could only provide electricity to a small number of customers in

the early morning hours and for a few hours at night. In 1927, the East Tennessee Light and Power Company purchased several of these small power plants and began generating electricity from a large hydro on the Watauga River. Although the new power plant supplied most of the urban population with electricity, company management argued that it was too expensive to string electric lines to isolated rural farmsteads and that, even if it were possible, most farmers were too poor to be able to pay for electricity.

In response to conditions like these, on May 11, 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037 establishing the Rural Electrification Administration. It authorized low interest loans to finance the building of power lines to rural areas. With REA funds, rural communities began organizing non-profit cooperatives to bring electricity to their homes. Owned and operated by the members they served, these organizations could purchase energy from private producers, run it through power lines erected by the cooperatives, and reinvest profits back into the cooperatives.

On April 1, 1941, a group of Johnson County farmers and residents met in an upstairs room over the People's Drug Store in Mountain City and organized the Mountain Electric Cooperative in order to bring affordable power to every home, urban or rural, in the county. Because of the new power lines, life changed dramatically. Almost overnight, electric lights replaced oil lamps; pump-operated indoor plumbing replaced wells and outhouses; washboards and hand-cranked wringer-washers were replaced with automatic washing machines; monitor-top refrigerators replaced iceboxes; and electric radios became standard issue. Electricity provided jobs, increased farm efficiency and productivity, and raised the standard of living for many rural families.

Because of a shortage of materials during World War II, the Mountain Electric Cooperative grew slowly. What few lines it was able to run received electric energy from the East Tennessee Light and Power Company, an expensive arrangement. However, when the Tennessee Valley Authority purchased East Tennessee Light and Power in 1945, Blevins negotiated an agreement to buy power directly from TVA in addition to electric transmission and distribution properties located in Johnson and Carter counties in Tennessee and Avery County in North Carolina. Shortly thereafter, the cooperative began to grow and purchased several small power companies.

Alfred H. McQueen was elected the cooperative's second president in 1948. In 1949, the cooperative purchased the Linville Valley Light and Power Company of Crossnore, North Carolina. By the end of 1949, the Mountain Electric Cooperative served 4,812 members and was in a position to provide electricity to its entire service area.

Today, the MEC distributes electricity generated by TVA to over 33,000 residential and business members in a 700-square-mile service area. In addition, it is actively involved in promoting the area's resources for economic development, assisting in recruiting businesses to the area, providing technical assistance to residences and businesses for improving energy efficiency, and administering youth programs such as the 4-H Electric Camp, the Washington Youth Tour, electrical safety classes, and numerous school career days. As part of its Energy Right Programs, it offers members a $300 rebate if their new homes meet specified energy saving standards and up to $100 if they convert to or install energy-efficient water heaters or heat pumps.

Even though Thomas Edison invented the light bulb in 1879 and wealthy city-dwellers began illuminating their homes and businesses early in the twentieth century, electricity was neither attainable nor affordable for rural residents of Johnson and Carter counties well beyond the Great Depression. In fact, had it not been for the determination and foresight of a handful of visionaries, electrification might have remained only a dream. Without question, the leadership and dedicated service of people like Chester Blevins, Alfred McQueen, and E.L. Lafferty helped make that dream possible. ❖

Margaret Nava is a regular contributor to *Now & Then*. She is the author of two New Mexico travel guides and three "Lady-Lit" novels about life and love in the twilight years.

Logo courtesy Mountain Electric Cooperative.

Good Dog

Thomas Alan Holmes

These seven years, you taught
our little girl to watch
a water bowl and keep
it full, to listen for
a whine beside a door,
to cup a face with love
without a word. Good dog.

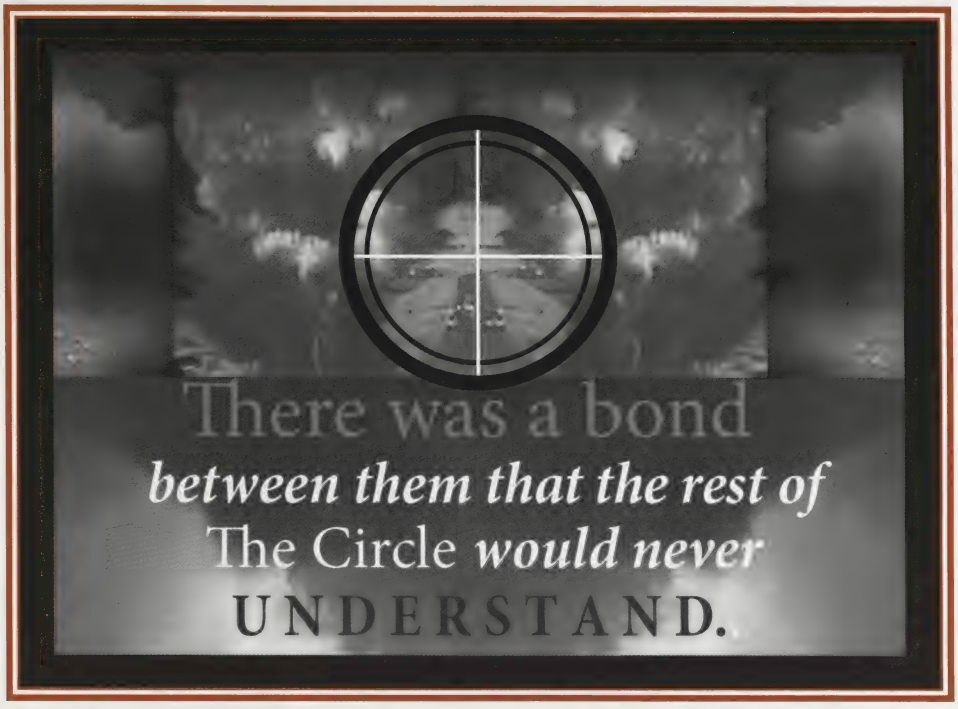
You helped our house feel full.
What if you sat too close
or licked more than we liked?
You wagged from shoulder back
and nosed our palms and watched
us live, reminding us
routine is blessed. Good dog.

Tonight, as our house sets,
I yearn to hear your claws
click down the hall and wait
for you to nose each door
ajar. Your bowl is dry,
but that end of the couch
is still your place. Good dog.

Thomas Alan Holmes is a member of the English faculty at East Tennessee State University. His work has appeared in *Appalachian Journal, Florida Review, Black Warrior Review, and The Southern Poetry Anthology Volume III: Contemporary Appalachia.*

Out of the Blue

Ken Staley



Uncle Ed's was the best place in the hollow for a bus stop. Several of us kids met the bus there every school day. Ed's store stands fifty feet up the lane from a bad curve in old Highway 41 on the way to Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee. Uncle Ed's is the social gathering spot in the hollow. The squat, peeling, white-washed clapboard building changes only with age and weather. Just to the left of the forever-dusty screen door hangs a Pepsi Cola sign in the shape of a bottle cap—antiquated and of indeterminate colors—with a thermometer in the center that no longer works. On the other side hangs a chipped and sun-bleached Coca-Cola sign that proudly announces Kendall Grocery. A tin roof streaked with rust covers the building and front porch. To my brother and me, though, it has always been Uncle Ed's Store.

When entering the store, you immediately saw a semicircle of old chairs facing a Franklin stove. Whenever it rained, the tin stove pipe, which jutted straight through the roof, hissed like a snake.

Each chair had its owner. A blue haze clouded Uncle Ed's Store every day as the men smoked constantly. Some rolled their own cigarettes, others used "store-boughts," but they all smoked. One or two chewed tobacco, now and then.

I wasn't old enough to join The Circle yet, but I could rest my feet on the bars of the stool as I nursed my peanut-filled Dr Pepper. Scooter Davis would slip me one of his store-boughts when he thought no one was looking.

Buster Jenkins, easily the eldest, chewed on a cigar. He started a new one every morning, and his lips moved the white plastic tip from one side of his mouth to the other, depending on who was talking. I never saw him light one, though. On a summer day, his John Deere hat came off occasionally so he could mop his brow.

Illustration by Randy Sanders.

He claimed to be sixty, others said he was seventy, and Uncle Ed swore he was eighty or more. He sat closest to the old stove, one end of the horseshoe. He needed to be close because of the lumbago, he claimed.

"More likely it's the lead behind your back pockets," Uncle Ed replied every time Buster made his excuse. "You only sit there so you can set your coffee cup or beer on the stove."

Big Al Davis sat next to Buster. An ox of a man, Big Al never said a word but followed every conversation with an intense stare, regardless of the topic or humor involved. He laughed only when everyone else did and, for a few minutes, after the general laughter died, his mouth would twitch at one corner.

All of Scooter Davis's movements were quick and darting, just like a mouse—the exact opposite of his older brother, Big Al—and he never went anywhere that he didn't take Al with him. Buster told me once when I was little that the red moustache under Scooter's nose was really a caterpillar. I kept waiting for it to cocoon, but it never did.

Clyde George, the man with two first names, sat in "The Wreck" and was the newest and youngest member of The Circle. The regulars argued at length when Buster brought his old stuffed chair in from home that The Wreck should go to the trash heap out back. That's where Clyde found it, stacked on the burn pile. Clyde salvaged the old chrome chair frame, denuded of any padding or softness. He slapped on a piece of old siding for a seat and resurrected it back to The Circle. Clyde shoved that mess in at the top of the horseshoe, inviting himself to join. A skinny man with black, greasy hair that always looked unwashed, Clyde talked too loudly and laughed too much at his own unfunny jokes. As much as possible, the rest of the circle ignored him completely.

Uncle Ed's chair closed the other end of the horseshoe, next to the stove, and he was closest to the counter for those times when someone needed something around the store. When a new person came in, Uncle Ed stood and hitched his suspenders, pulling his khaki pants almost into his armpits. Since he knew most of his customers on a first-name basis, he rarely had to move until it was time for them to pay.

Buster was always first to arrive, usually right after lunch unless it was blazing hot, and then he got there earlier. Clyde George was next. Sometimes I think Clyde hid down the road and waited for Buster. Seems he didn't ever want to be first, but he sure wasn't going to be last in case some stranger should show up and claim

He was just a kid when he left, they all said later. But this wasn't a gangly high-school kid with greasy hair and a face full of pimples. This was a young man haunted by his recent history.

The Wreck. Scooter and Al wandered in last—early on the days they didn't work, late on fall days when they could cut and deliver firewood. They always smelled of ash and red maple and two-cycle exhaust.

Then, on that October day, clean out of the blue, in walked Bobby Ray. He opened the screen and stood in the door, allowing his eyes time to adjust to the dim light. He wore his Army hat and his fatigue jacket with his name patch above the breast pocket. He'd been gone some time. He was just a kid when he left, they all said later. But this wasn't a gangly high-school kid with greasy hair and a face full of pimples. This was a young man haunted by his recent history.

All eyes went to him as the jokes and stories stopped. Without a word, Bobby Ray moved back through the aisles to the far cooler and took out a six pack of Schlitz. No one else in the store moved, but we all watched him carefully. When he came to the counter, I could see he walked with a gimp. His left leg just didn't seem to work quite like his right leg, and as he passed me, his left knee creaked a bit, like he needed WD 40.

"Bob," Uncle Ed said with a short nod when Bobby Ray came to the counter. Uncle Ed was already there, his chest out, trying to suck in his stomach. I was surprised. Before today he always called him Bobby Ray and didn't move until Bobby stood at the counter. Now it was Bob. "Anything else?"

Bobby Ray didn't respond right away. He stared over Uncle Ed's shoulder, out the small window, and then seemed to quiver like a cold, wet dog before shaking his head no.

"Set a spell?" Uncle Ed asked.

Again the pause, but this time Bobby Ray nodded yes and, much to my shock, went over and sat down in Uncle Ed's chair. That caused some shuffling. The

Circle never invited strangers to "set a spell." Buster, of course, didn't move. He was, after all, sitting in his own chair. Scooter and Al stood, Scooter's being the second best chair in the group, which meant that they expected Clyde George to move, too. He did so only after Big Al stood in front of him and glowered. That meant, for the day at least, Clyde was a stander. And you had to stand outside the horseshoe if you wanted to stay. Uncle Ed didn't allow people to lean against his counters or the stove.

Then Uncle Ed did something I never saw him do before. He reached down into the soda cooler, pushed what was left of the block of ice aside, and brought out two long-neck bottles. Popping the caps on both, he carried them to The Circle and offered one to Bobby Ray. They toasted each other silently and took long pulls of the cold, homemade brew.

"That's right," Clyde said loudly from the outer edge of the group, not wanting to be forgotten and trying to fit in. "You been in the war, ain't you?"

Bobby Ray said nothing, just lowered his head with a slight nod. Everyone knew the Army sent Bobby Ray to Iraq. Few knew that he drove a supply truck there; fewer still that he'd been wounded.

"Say, was you at that jail? You know, Apple Gravy or whatever it was?" Clyde asked, laughing at his own joke. He was the only one who did laugh, though.

"No."

"Oh, that's right," Clyde snapped his fingers as though he'd just remembered. "You just drove a truck, didn't you?"

"That'll do," Uncle Ed said. Usually those words changed the topic.

"How long you been home, Bobby Ray?" Scooter Davis asked after a long pause.

"Week."

"How's your folks?" Uncle Ed said, trying to fill in another quiet bit and make Bobby Ray comfortable.

"About the same. Things don't change much here, do they? Guess that's why I wanted to come back so bad." A longing echoed in his voice as he looked about the store. "It doesn't change here."

Clyde called over the shoulder of Big Al, trying too hard not to be left out: "How many of them rag heads did you kill from the cab of your truck there?"

"You're steppin' right close to the edge there, Clyde," Uncle Ed said coolly, pinning Clyde to silence with his look.

"Edge of what?" I asked him one day when he said the same thing to me.

"Why, the very edge of Tarnation, boy," he replied.

Bobby Ray said nothing and just stared through his beer at the floor.

"What happened to your leg?" Buster asked quietly. He was the group patriarch, a veteran of World War II, and had the right to ask. Buster claimed he'd been wounded, but I never saw the scar.

"IED," Bobby sighed as he sat back a bit. When he saw the puzzled look on Big Al's face, he guessed that the rest of the group didn't understand either.

"Roadside bomb. See, they just left cars all over, or piles of trash. You never knew. Now and then the bomb was a person. Suicide bomber—pop tops we called them because the head shoots straight up like a cap from a shaken-up pop. Pieces of meat everywhere."

"Nobody checked?" Scooter asked.

Most of The Circle was quiet, leaning in, willing to let him sit quietly in peace and enjoy his beer if he wanted but happier still for Bobby's willingness to share.

"There were too many piles of trash, burned-out cars, broken water mains. You could spend all day just tipping over trash piles and never see anything but garbage. You can't imagine what it was like. The smell . . . ."

"I heard you was back," Scooter said. "I mean, before this."

"I was," Bobby Ray nodded. "Twice. They sent us back. Got this the last time," he said, slapping his leg.

He took a long pull from his beer.

"Third time's the charm, I guess." He smiled as he said it and the tension in The Circle eased some, but it wasn't a happy smile.

"These old fools don't know," Uncle Ed said. "But I do. I was there."

"'Nam?" Bobby Ray asked.

"Korea," Ed said.

I hadn't known. He never talked about it, ever.

"Inchon."

"Come on, Ed, you were a cook," Buster said. "What did you do? Throw your soup at 'em?"

The group laughed, too loudly. Bobby Ray just

smiled and tilted his bottle at Uncle Ed. There was a bond between them that the rest of The Circle would never understand.

"Hospital?" Scooter seemed to know just what to ask and how to say it so as not to offend Bobby Ray.

"Six months. I gotta go back and get this fixed." He tapped his left leg with his bottle, causing an audible clank.

"Hey! You can be the Tin Man in the Wizard of Oz now," Clyde said. Nobody laughed except him.

Bobby Ray finished his beer to fill the silence. The Circle was ashamed that they'd even let Clyde sit down among them. When his bottle was empty, Bobby Ray stood.

"Thanks for the beer," he said as he handed Uncle Ed the bottle and crossed for his six pack, still sitting on the counter. All eyes followed him but nobody moved. When he got to the counter, he leaned against it and sighed heavily. When he turned around, he lifted his pants leg.

Pipe. That's all. Strapped somehow to an angry red stump just below his knee. The contraption ended in a G.I. boot.

"So you didn't get to torture nobody, you didn't kill no rag heads, and the only medal you brought home is a fake leg," Clyde said. "Hardly seems worth it."

I moved closer to Uncle Ed, feeling his tension. I knew he was really angry, and so were the others. I was angry, too, but didn't really know why. But I knew then exactly what Uncle Ed meant by "crossing the line." Clyde George just took a large step over it. There he was, on the very edge of Tarnation, and I knew The Wreck was headed for a permanent place in the trash heap real soon.

Bobby Ray looked at him—and looked through him—and I hope I never, ever live long enough to have any man stare at me the way he did Clyde George that day. Clyde even took a couple of steps back, looking like he wanted to run. Bobby Ray just stood there and made no threatening move, either for Clyde or the door. He just stared at Clyde George. Finally he smiled. Not a funny smile but a smile of death.

"No," he said as he turned and scooped his six pack from the counter and started for the door. Clyde George gave him a wide berth. Bobby Ray stopped just as he touched the screen and said in a quiet, haunted whisper to the outside world:

"It wasn't worth it at all." ❖

Ken Staley is a retired English teacher who lives and writes in the lower end of the Yakima Valley, surrounded by orchards and several wineries. When not writing, he can be found working stained glass or sipping the variety of excellent wines in the area.

Denver Bailey on "The Wisdom of the Earth and Goodness of the Soul"

An Interview by John Huie

After purchasing a disassembled storage shed and having it loaded into my van, I drove out of Lowe's Hardware wondering how I would unload the 250-pound over-sized container by myself when I got home.

As I approached an intersection and slowed for the red light, I spotted a lanky, leather-hatted young man on the sidewalk holding a cardboard sign for all to read: "I'd rather work than beg." He reminded me of Ichabod Crane. Taking notice of his honest face and confident manner, I acted on impulse, honked and waved at him. I pulled into an open parking area at a service station, and he came running up and said: "I'm ready to work, brother. My name's Denver Bailey, and I'd rather work than beg, and I'm a very hard worker." We shook hands and I invited him to "hop in."

Denver and I worked and sweated together side by side to assemble the shed, laughing and talking all the way. The next day he mulched the entire yard around my house, cleaned out brush, re-organized my garden, moved heavy stones from place to place, laid a stone walkway, trimmed shrubbery, and more. He has a ferocious work ethic, a great spirit, and a marvelous sense of humor. I feel kinship with him and realize I've found a new friend.

My neighbors on each side took notice and asked Denver if he would work for them. I hope to help launch him in the landscaping business, starting right here in my neighborhood. He is highly motivated. He has opened a bank account for the first time in his life.

Denver tells stories of his childhood growing up in a coal-mining town in eastern Kentucky. He is amazingly articulate and succinct in his storytelling, and he peppers every other sentence with folk wisdom and sayings.

"Denver, where did you get all that wisdom?" I asked. "Well, brother man," he responded, "I been on my own a long time, had no choice about that, and I learn something from everywhere I go. I walked across this country twice, sure did, and I tell you a man learns a lot when he gets off the main highways and makes his way across this country."

"How long did it take to walk across the country, Denver?"

"I didn't keep track. I was trying to get lost, trying to lose my problems. I got a ride from a trucker once. He

Denver Bailey and John Huie. Photo by Tracey Schmidt.

asked me: 'Boy, you got any weapons on you?' I said 'No sir.' And he said, 'Well, I ain't got to worry about it either way.' He reached up behind the interior light in the truck cab, and he pulled a switch and a double-barreled shotgun dropped down, hanging from the roof of his truck. He was letting me know if I did anything stupid, I was a dead man. I've met so many people. I see their faces every night when I close my eyes, the good and the bad. The pure and the evil."

One morning I made Denver a big breakfast with eggs, ham, grits, biscuits, orange juice, and coffee. We sat together eating and chatting under the big oak tree in my backyard.

"How you feeling today, Denver?" I asked.

"Been better, been worse, but still smiling," he replied.

"Are you in good health all the time?"

"Well, I got some hurtin' in the back, but I don't slow down. Weakness is just pain leaving the body!"

We kept chewing and savoring our eggs and grits for a minute before I said, "Denver, you're quite a guy and you have an amazing work ethic. I think word will spread fast and you'll find a lot of yard and handyman work around these parts."

He responded immediately: "A man is only worth his name, brother man. I can walk in any store in Hazard, Kentucky, where I grew up, and I'd be related to somebody. And there'd be somebody in there who would say something bad about the Baileys. All of 'em in my family were bootleggers and outlaws. I didn't choose my bloodline but I do carry the clan name with me, that's a fact. My daddy was real strict. No love, no understanding. I said if nothing else I'm going to work to become a better man than he was. It was emotional abuse I took from him; my mother took the physical abuse. Those folks—my papaw, granny, mama, and daddy—I just left all of 'em behind and hit the road when I was fifteen. They'll be fighting amongst themselves the rest of their days, I reckon, like the Hatfields and the McCoys. I didn't want no more of all that, so I hit the road."

Musing on this outburst of disclosure, I finally muttered, "Well, all I know is you are one helluva good worker and you can figure out how to do almost anything. Are you aware that you have a very good mind and a good heart as well?"

"I know I'm a sentient being, brother man, and I do what it takes to get along. I'll sing for my supper and click my heels for a nickel, but I won't beg. I like to stay busy doing things. My daddy was a carpenter and Mama was a cake decorator—guess that's how I got my artistic flair. Got my papaw's good looks and Mama's wit, I guess. Past few days I been working on making a simple banjo out of a turtle shell. Like to show it to you when I finish. Might even sing something for you. Don't remember if I told you, but I'm dyslexic—see numbers backwards. I've got a dyslexic banjo I made myself. I put the face of a clock on it with Roman numerals running counter-clockwise. You hold it up in front of a mirror and it reads clock-wise."

The only way to know your strength is to struggle, brother man. Last ten years of my life taught me to appreciate every day, take nothing for granted.

Denver and I sang along together spontaneously from time to time as we rode in my van to pick up materials at Lowe's or made a run to the landfill. Given the half century between us, I was amazed and pleased we knew some of the same songs—a few gospel and folk ditties like "Nobody Knows the Trouble I Seen." He educated me on the ways in which punk rock is blending with Appalachian mountain music. He told me he sings for his supper in downtown Asheville, standing in front of Mast General Store on occasional Friday nights. "You'd be surprised at how much I can take in on a good night," he said.

"Denver, did you ever think about joining the military?"

"Got to be honest with you, brother man, I did think about it. I decided I got a soul but I'm not a soldier. If I ever got called, I'd go, but I'm not voluntarily putting myself out on the battlefield for no reason. The only way to know your strength is to struggle, brother man. Last ten years of my life taught me to appreciate every day, take nothing for granted. It makes a man humble and very respectful of the food and water going into his body."

"Denver, you've known some hard times, yet you seem to have no feelings of bitterness."

"I've known kindness, sir," he responded. "I've

been fed and sheltered and taken in out of the rain more times than I can remember."

"How did you come by your values and attitudes?"

"A man ain't worth nothing but his name, brother man. If a man has good morals, good values, he puts out good vibes to the universe, and he will be provided for. We can't take anything with us when we go. What we have left in this life is for the next generation. You can quote the Bible, you can look under a rock. It all breaks down to this: We were given to this earth to take care of it. First thing the white man did when he stepped on this land was to see there were ample trees to build, and he started ripping up the land, cutting the trees. The natives who had been living off this land way before we got here had been doing just fine, living with the land."

"You're a deep thinker, Denver."

"I'm not just one person, sir. I am the collective. If it weren't for the fellows before us, there would be no us. We would have no knowledge. We would not have the understanding we have. Everything we have today we have those in the past to thank for. We have to pass on that knowledge and the wisdom of the earth and the goodness of the soul to help the young to grow up strong and wise instead of weak and foolish."

"You do much reading, Denver?"

"Read all the time, sir."

"What do you like to read?"

"Isaac Asimov, Kurt Vonnegut, and Hemingway are some of my favorites. And I've read a lot of Freud, always felt he pointed out the obvious. *1984* by George Orwell—we aren't far from that now, sir—segregation by class I mean. Our best chance is with the poor. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. If the weakest link is the poverty in our society, then a rich man is only as wealthy as his lowly brother."

"Did you start reading early?"

"Had a sister who read to me all the time when I was a boy, and my favorite was *Alice in Wonderland*. I got my G.E.D. when I was in foster care. Had some good teachers for sure. My dyslexia gave me problems with numbers but not with reading. My daddy was a finish carpenter and he screamed at me all the time because I couldn't read a tape measure right, always got my 2s, 6s, and 9s mixed up. In the last few years, I picked up the banjo and started counting, reading tablature, the timing, beats in a measure. This helped me overcome my dyslexia. But I never had any trouble reading. All through school when I was put in groups of various kinds, I always took the lead. An alpha thing, I guess. I'm the first one to speak up and say we gotta figure this out."

"Denver, are you optimistic about where our society is headed?"

"Fact is, brother man, we're living in a cesspool of filth of our own making. Every day we burn more oil, we're taking food out of our mouths. The earth will cleanse itself, will wash itself clean someday. Not in my day, but it will happen. History repeats itself. The mistakes we've made, we are doomed to repeat them. That's understood."

"You sound like an Old Testament prophet."

"All I can tell you is that when a man has nothing, he realizes what his needs are. Simplicity—food, shelter, ability to warm himself—that's all he needs. If a man has never really had comfort, then a rock is comfortable for a pillow. I can remember times walking in the woods as the sun peeks through the clouds, and I can remember waking up and rolling over and running my fingers through the tall grass, and I remember washing my face in the morning dew."

"You're a poet, Denver."

A smile broadened across his face as we made full eye contact.

After a long silence, I asked, "Denver, do you mind being interviewed like this, my asking all these questions?"

"Don't mind at all, sir. If you get famous by interviewing me, just give me a cut. And if I get famous, I'll give you a cut!"

At that we both break down laughing.

"Sounds like a deal to me, brother man," I say.

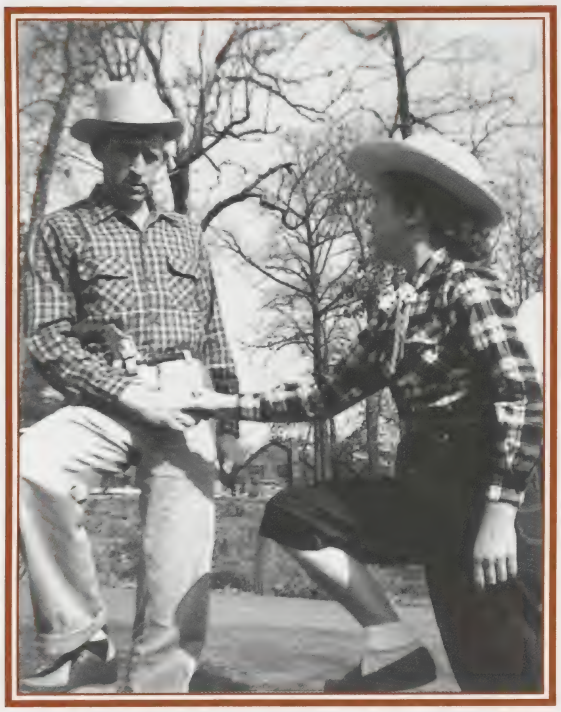
We stand up for a full man-to-man embrace and then head back to the mulch pile. ❖

John Huie, former director of the North Carolina Outward Bound School, lives in Asheville. He is a national educational consultant who works with families of struggling teenagers and young adults.

Denver Bailey runs his own business in Asheville, Right Now Clean-up, and continues to entertain himself and others with his banjo-picking and singing on occasional weekends downtown.

Squeezing the Scale

Judy Lee Green



When the smell of my mama's country fried chicken began to waft through the house, and the top on the pinto beans began to bounce up and down, and the cream-style corn my mama had cut off the cob began to bubble, and the lid on the potatoes began to dance (a signal that they were ready to be mashed), and the cornbread glowed a golden brown and turned loose at the edges of the cast iron skillet, my mama would holler, "If you're not passed out from hunger yet, we'll be ready to eat in about ten minutes."

There was no dieting in the 1950s. We had never heard of calories. Meals were occasions to celebrate, and good food was to be enjoyed. My parents had grown up during the Depression when there was never enough to eat. When my mama announced that food was being put on the table, my daddy left the living room and returned immediately, carrying the bathroom scale.

When we had company for a meal at our house, we always squeezed the scale before we ate. With both his hands locked around the sides and his thumbs on top, my daddy, strong from physical labor, could squeeze 150 pounds or better. His brothers, all carpenters, were equally strong. Younger relatives, those less fit, and women and children squeezed anywhere from ten pounds on up.

After a winner of squeezing the scale was declared, the instrument was placed in the middle of the living room floor. One by one everyone weighed and proudly called out his or her weight.

My six-foot tall daddy always weighed in at 165 pounds, my Uncle Bo at 175. Men and children weighed first, then the women. My mama would come out of the kitchen wiping her hands on her apron and step on the scale. Then we ate.

We ate and ate. When we had company there were

Judy Lee Green's parents, Ed and Levida Bingham Lee, grew up during the Depression when there was never enough to eat. Good food became a cause for celebration. Photo courtesy Judy Lee Green.

always two meats, half a dozen vegetables, coleslaw, sliced tomatoes, cucumbers, deviled eggs, relishes, gelatin salads, fruit salads, cornbread and biscuits, gallons of iced cold sweet tea, coffee, and three or four desserts.

When it seemed that everyone had quit, my mama would say, "There's a spoonful of mashed potatoes over here. Who wants to clean out the bowl?"

Or she'd say, "Who wants this last piece of fried chicken? You'll be hungry tomorrow and wish you had it."

She fussed, "I can't believe nobody's going to eat this last piece of pecan pie," and usually someone did.

As chairs were being scooted away from the table, comments were made by first one and then another.

"I'm as full as a tick."

"I feel like I've been fattened up and now somebody's going to kill me."

"I'm hurting I'm so full."

"I've let my belt out two notches and I still can't get a deep breath."

My Uncle Bo always asked my Aunt Essell if she was as miserable as he was. When she agreed, he would say, "Then I'll rub your belly if you'll rub mine." He guffawed and everybody howled.

Someone would always complain, "Oh, don't make me laugh. It hurts too much to laugh."

My daddy was the first to step back on the scale. He called out his earlier weight, then rejoiced if he registered a pound or two more after eating. Everyone weighed and the winner was the one who had gained the most weight.

Often someone would protest, "I ate more than you did. You must have bloated up on sweet tea."

From the time I was a little girl until my own little girl was grown, squeezing the scale and weighing before and after a meal were traditions in our family that implied strength and power. The ritual continued until my daddy became too weak and too sick with cancer for us to continue. He lost his appetite for food and the joy he always found in eating.

Weighing before and after a special meal was the way my daddy proved to himself that he was no longer a skinny little barefoot boy in ragged clothes who was always weak and hungry. He couldn't recall his childhood without remembering the gnawing in his gut and the cold in his bones. So we celebrated the fact that we were well nourished and we were strong. We ate too much and we squeezed the scale. ❖

Judy Lee Green, of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, is a writer and speaker whose spirit and roots reach deep into the Appalachian Mountains. Tennessee-bred and cornbread-fed, she has published widely and has received numerous awards for her work.

From the time she was a little girl, Judy Lee Green (back row, right) remembers squeezing the scale and weighing before and after a big meal, a tradition in her family. Photo courtesy Judy Lee Green.

From the Recipe Book

Tina Parker

Another day over dough
I know won't rise. Nan's rolls,
a recipe on scratch paper,
scrawled in her hand.
Yeast in warm water, sugar,
salt, milk. A complete list
but no directions. Certain things
she thought a girl should know.
Only I don't, and it's too late to ask.

Now her food arrives on plastic
trays, carefully portioned purees
from a kitchen she will never see.
What of the hours we spent
in her home? Three daughters,
six grandchildren, all those two-
meat meals. Fresh fruit cobblers
in homemade crust and her rolls,
baked in buttered muffin tins.

Oh grandmother, my Nanny.
Take my hand. I'll take you back.
Your house is warm, every stove
eye lit. I watch as you lift
each lid. I sit at your table,
ready to be filled.

Tina Parker grew up in Bristol, Virginia, and now lives in Berea, Kentucky.

"Eat What You Are": Community-Supported Agriculture at Oakwyn Farms

Rachel Parsons

In southern West Virginia, a family provides healthy, homegrown foods for their community by way of Community-Supported Agriculture.

The food you buy in the grocery store today brings with it many questions. What kinds of chemicals were used to produce it? What health risks are associated with certain preservatives? How diverse are the ingredients in the assortment of processed foods that are available? It can be overwhelming to keep up with all the facts. But in some places there is an alternative. At my family's Oakwyn Farms in West Virginia, my mother and grandparents saw the need to provide a safer way for people to eat. They started what is known as a CSA—a Community-Supported Agriculture program. Through the CSA, we provide fresh, homegrown vegetables for many of our fellow community members for a weekly fee.

Our family has always lived off the land. As long as I can remember, my parents grew a garden. They learned to do this from my grandparents, who learned from their parents. From a young age, I learned to tend a garden and to harvest and preserve the food provided by it. By growing and canning our own green beans, corn, tomatoes, and many other vegetables, we greatly reduce the amount of food we have to purchase from the store. Because we raise it in our own backyards, we know exactly where that food has been and what goes into it. There is no question that it is safe, because we grew it to be exactly that.

My grandparents, Sid and Dana Moye, sometimes sell their extra vegetables at farmers' markets or flea markets, and there is always a demand. My mother, Wendy Johnston, had heard about CSAs and started doing research on how to organize one. This would solve two problems. One is the problem of acquaintances who could not make it to the farmers' market on time; the second is what to do with vegetables that didn't sell at the market.

Often, not all of the vegetables we took to the market would sell, either because of an overabundance of a particular crop or because of weather conditions preventing people from visiting the market. These vegetables would then need to be preserved quickly or given away. In her research, my mother discovered that

Vegetable Basket Share from Oakwyn Farms. Photo courtesy Wendy Johnston.

a system for distribution of vegetable "shares" could be set up. Only the vegetables needed for the shares would be picked, thereby reducing waste. By charging a reasonable weekly fee for the vegetable shares, we would ensure that we could afford to continue to provide this service for our community.

We employ a variety of methods for growing the optimal amount of vegetables. My stepfather's farm, Oakwyn Farms, is located in Athens, West Virginia, and is the main base of operation. At Oakwyn, we have one large garden that takes up about an acre and a half of land, where we grow most of the beans, corn, and tomatoes. Closer to my parents' house, there are smaller raised-bed gardens, for onions, peppers, sweet peas, and salad greens. My grandparents also garden on their own farm, Mountain Valley Farm, in Rock, West Virginia.

The biggest problem we've had is with deer eating the crops. Last year my stepfather erected a tall electric fence around the large garden. This was the only way we could keep deer out, despite trying methods such as tying plastic bags in the garden to scare them away.

Everything is grown organically. We experiment with various organic pesticides, searching for the safest way to fight bugs. Keeping up with a garden is a fulltime job, in order to keep ahead of the weeds and the bugs and in order to harvest the various crops on time. However, we take no shortcuts with chemicals of any sort. My mother firmly believes that introducing potentially harmful elements is not worth the risk. Little comforts like chemical pesticides or enhanced fertilizer are not allowed. This means more physical labor in the garden, but it ensures that the food is safe and healthy.

Every week during the summer, we harvest what we need for about fifteen shares. These are placed in baskets and crates for people to pick up on a designated day. Crops like green beans are often harvested one or two days before pickup day, since they require a lot of time. Tomatoes, peppers, and corn are harvested the morning of pickup day.

We go out early in the morning to avoid summer heat and usually have our vegetables gathered by

midday. The next couple of hours are spent carefully arranging, cleaning, and dividing them up, a process that takes longer than one might think. Then the vegetables are taken out to our front porch, where we wait for pickup. When customers arrive, we explain all the different vegetables available that week and suggest different ways to prepare them.

Before the season even started this past year, we had people asking to be "put on the list" for a share. If we doubled our current production, we would probably have plenty of new customers eager to buy shares. As it is, we raise the maximum amount we can, given that it's a family-run endeavor and we have to do all the work in the gardens ourselves.

By operating this CSA, we are encouraging other people to raise gardens of their own. Gardening is one of the oldest Appalachian traditions, and it is a tradition through which we can not only take care of ourselves and our neighbors but also connect to our roots. When I work in the garden with my family, I think of my many ancestors who lived in this place and worked the land, feeding themselves and their children with the riches it provided. ❖

Rachel Parsons is majoring in English at East Tennessee State University. When not attending classes, she lives on a farm in southern West Virginia.

Locally grown vegetables at a farmers' market. Photo courtesy Charlie Warden.

Serving Appalachia Through Theatre

Melissa Nipper

Richard Major, a theatre professor at Milligan College in northeast Tennessee, has visited more than 200 elementary schools over the last twenty-four years. He's been to big-city schools, public schools, private schools, and schools tucked into the farthest corners of the mountains of Appalachia.

Each fall, the founder of Milligan's Theatre for Young Audiences leads a troupe of student actors on a tour of elementary schools throughout northeast Tennessee and surrounding areas. The students perform an original children's play in front of their elementary audiences, usually at no or little cost to the schools.

"We have different experiences at all the schools we visit, but one thing is the same—the children's laughter," Major said. "I tell my students that regardless of how their week is going, the highlight of that week is going to be when they go in the schools and perform for the children and greet them afterward. For me, there's nothing more pleasing than hearing 300 kids laugh at once. It's music, and it brings out the kid in me.

"I also know we've been successful when I hear the teachers laughing along with the children at our productions. This always lets me know there will be some discussions going on in the classroom once the show ends."

Taking his shows on the road is also an opportunity for Major to share his passion for the arts with schoolchildren throughout the region.

"Appalachia has a rich heritage of inspiring literature, distinctive musical sounds, beautiful art, and engaging theatre," Major said. "We've passed these traditions down from one generation to the next, and the purpose of Theatre for Young Audiences is to ignite in the next generation a passion for the performing arts. It's given me intense pleasure to know that, in many cases, we're providing the first live theatrical experience for many of these children."

Major has already seen the generational impact of Theatre for Young Audiences, which is almost a quarter century old. "Over the years, we've performed in front of 185,000 children. It really hit me how long we'd been doing it when about ten years ago, one of my students told me he'd seen our performances when he was in elementary school," Major said.

The Next Generation

When she was in third grade, Lacie Black sat in the audience at University School in Johnson City, Tennessee, and watched a children's play performed by the Milligan Theatre for Young Audiences.

"I remember how enthralled I was with the performance," Black said. "When you are a child,

A photo from a Theatre for Young Audiences performance of "Rock the Vote." Photo courtesy Milligan College.

watching those older than you, particularly college students, is very fascinating. It was so exciting to have those performers come to our school, and I admired their ability to get up in front of our entire elementary school in order to entertain us."

When Black was a junior theatre major at Milligan, she became a member of the very same troupe that captured her attention as a child. She performed in ten local elementary schools with the Milligan College Theatre for Young Audiences company.

"It's very rewarding to see my students like Lacie, who developed a passion for the arts at a young age, come full circle and share the arts with children," said Major, who has maintained a passion for children's theatre throughout his career. Before coming to Milligan, he worked at Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, where he oversaw the theatre for young audiences programming from 1983 to 1989 and started the Acting Workshop program for children in 1984.

"When I came to Milligan, I wanted to get more students engaged in theatre and build a relationship between the college and local elementary schools," Major said.

After coming up with the idea to create a traveling theatre troupe for young audiences, Major consulted Dr. Paul Clark, Milligan's teacher education director. Clark, who passed away in 1999, provided an excellent sounding board for creating an educational and entertaining experience for schools. The result was Milligan Theatre for Young Audiences, which is both a class at Milligan and the name of the theatre troupe. The students enrolled in the class perform the original plays for audiences at area schools.

Through the years, the productions have ranged from fairytales to plays focusing on social issues. One of the most acclaimed productions was *The Recycling Play*, performed 175 times to a combined audience of 60,000 children in Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia.

"*The Recycling Play* became a big hit," Major said. "Eastman Chemical Company and Waste Management of North America got involved to sponsor it, which allowed us to have first-rate costumes and scenery and to travel more extensively with it."

Major fondly recalls going to remote communities like the elementary school in Mendota, Virginia, to perform the production. "I remember how wonderfully polite the children and their teachers were at the Mendota school," said Major. "Performing there reminded me of my own limited exposure to theatre as a child growing up in rural Ohio."

In 1991 the students took *The Recycling Play* on the road to Atlanta, after they were invited to perform by America the Beautiful Fund®, a national non-profit organization started in 1963 to encourage volunteer citizen efforts and to protect the natural historic beauty of America.

Another show that garnered a lot of attention for Milligan Theatre for Young Audiences was *Harriet the Rabbit Kicks the Habit*, a play about smoking cessation based on the fable of the tortoise and the hare. It earned a Health Heroes award from Mountain States Health Alliance in 2000.

Major and Dr. Bert Allen, Milligan professor of psychology, worked closely with school guidance counselors to develop age-appropriate material that addressed this important topic. They also consulted with Dr. Tony DeLucia, a faculty member at East Tennessee State University's Quillen College of Medicine. DeLucia, at the time, was serving as president of the American Lung Association.

The educational aspect of the productions is one reason the plays have been so successful in the schools, said Dr. Robbie Anderson, director of accountability and school improvement for Johnson City Schools.

"The follow-up materials they bring with them ensure that the teachers have a chance to help the children process what they've seen in the play," said Anderson. "Teachers and students like the shows because they're fun and interactive."

Major and his troupe of actors educate their young theatergoers and make them laugh in the process of learning.

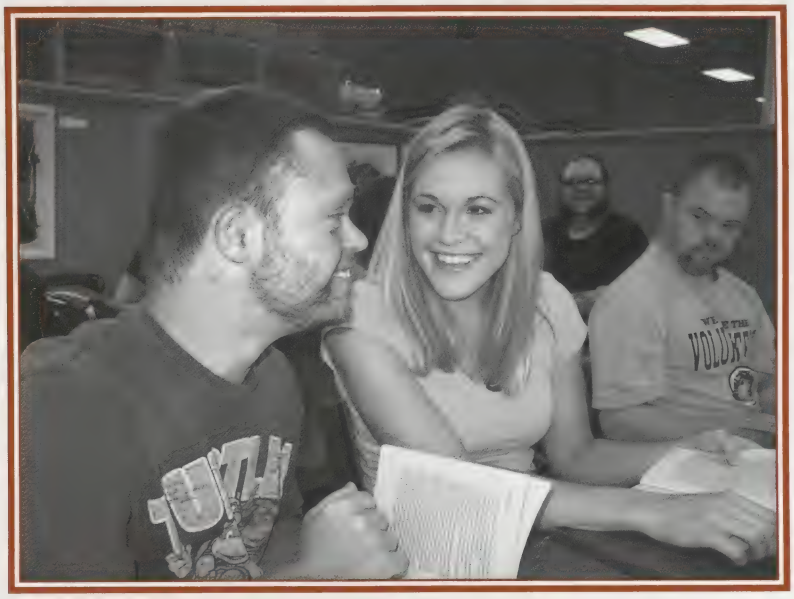
"The music of that laughter will keep a smile on my face for many months to come." ❖

Melissa Nipper is a public relations writer at Milligan College. She has worked at several newspapers in Tennessee and Kentucky, including nine years as a sections editor at the *Lexington Herald-Leader* in Kentucky.

Richard Major. Photo courtesy Milligan College.

Turning Pages Together

Joe Smith



The beeping sound of a tow-motor scooting in reverse through the Earth Fare supermarket doesn't create the most conducive setting for reading a book just two aisles over in the café. Nor do the periodic intercom announcements and the chattering sounds from guests who have just arrived for a late weekend morning breakfast.

But no distraction is going to spoil the excitement for Evan, Brad, José, and Eric on this breezy August Saturday. It's book club day; actually it is their first time back together following a brief summer hiatus, and they are anxiously ready to turn the pages of *Shiloh*, the classic book by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor about a young boy who rescues an abused dog.

Turning pages together is exactly what Dr. Cynthia Chambers had hoped these guys would do all along. In fact, that's the name of her program, Turning Pages Together, an initiative that coordinates book clubs across the Tri-Cities region of Tennessee, for adults and adolescents with disabilities.

It has been a successful program, expanding from one book club to eleven during the past year. It secured a state grant and has captured praise from educators across Tennessee. The true value of Turning Pages Together, however, isn't measured by dollars, words, or awards but rather the excitement and smiles on the faces of José and his co-readers one reads aloud while the others attentively and respectfully follow along, each moving his index finger along the page, word by word, line by line.

Though she helped "turn the first few pages" to get the program started, Chambers, a special education faculty member at East Tennessee State University, is quick to shift the praise toward her ETSU students who lead the book clubs, crediting them for moving the project forward, semester after semester. In fact, it was in one of her classrooms where the concept of the program was introduced.

"During my first year at ETSU, I had three students who were looking for an independent study project, and one option we discussed was hosting a book club for adults with disabilities," Chambers said. "Many of these people have no access to literacy, so the students and I knew the need was definitely there. The more we talked about the idea, the more excited we got."

The book club began meeting on Friday afternoons

Evan West (left) reads with Kaitlin Bevins, an ETSU student and Turning Pages Together facilitator. Photo courtesy Joe Smith.

at Barnes & Noble in Johnson City. Filling the seats with adult participants was never a challenge.

"They loved it and looked forward to coming back each week," Chambers said.

And so did the students, she added. From the beginning, the book clubs were structured so that the ETSU students would facilitate the group, with Chambers providing training for the leaders and serving as a resource, if needed.

"It proved to be a transforming experience for the students," she said. "They saw what a difference it had made in the adults who attended, and they were motivated to keep making that difference."

As the semester came to an end, so did the independent study project, but the students decided they didn't want to close their books and put them back on the shelves. They wanted to keep the group going. And they did. Three years later, the Friday afternoon book club is still meeting.

"Week after week, the student volunteers kept coming, and one was so passionate about the book club that she facilitated the meetings throughout the summer," Chambers said.

The support from student volunteers was strong. The enthusiasm from the adult participants had no ceiling. Chambers began looking for ways to grow the program.

In 2010, she received a grant from the Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities to expand the number of book clubs and take Turning Pages Together into other northeast Tennessee counties. The grant provided funds for the books participants would read and for a coordinator to oversee the project. Within a year, ten additional groups had started, including one that meets in Sevierville, more than an hour away from Johnson City.

"Our groups include emergent readers as well as those who do some reading at home," Chambers said. "Everyone is supportive of one another, and if someone is struggling, we stop and help them.

"Obviously, the book club has been a great social connection for everyone. We have a great time together, and when we finish each book we have a party. Some readers get together at other times as well."

All of the book clubs convene in open places like cafés or bookstores. The decision to meet in highly-visible locations was intentional.

"I picked these particular venues because I wanted people to see our readers. Turning Pages Together is more than just building literacy. People with disabilities need to feel like they are part of their communities, and the book clubs put them at the very same places where everyone else goes to read."

Since joining the ETSU faculty in 1997, Chambers has helped create other opportunities for people with disabilities. These programs include Families and Siblings United, which coordinates games, activities, and group discussions for siblings and family members of children with disabilities. She also worked with ETSU graduate student Kathleen Buttolph to launch POP Arts, a new theatre program for children and adults with disabilities. Members of POP Arts meet on Tuesday evenings and on Saturdays and have already performed their first production.

Chambers is present for these events, but ultimately the show is always being run by her students.

"They put so much of their energy and time into these programs, but they see how rewarding it is in return. Working with diverse groups of people in diverse backgrounds better prepares them to enter the school systems as special education teachers."

Evan, who is part of the Saturday morning book club at Earth Fare, also attends POP Arts. He is twenty-three and has Down syndrome. His mom Karen read about Turning Pages Together in the newspaper and decided to get him involved.

"He loves coming here each week," says Karen, who is seated at a nearby table while Evan and his friends read *Shiloh*. "Before he joined, Evan didn't have much interest in books, but now he perceives himself as a reader, and he loves reading to his niece and nephew."

When the hour came to an end and the students helped the men get ready to leave, I thanked the group for allowing me to spend my Saturday morning with them.

"You guys seem to really enjoy book club," I told them.

José stood up and shouted, "Amen!" ❖

Joe Smith is director of media relations at East Tennessee State University.

"Whose Appalachia is it Anyway?"

Michael Feely

Critics and scholars may argue at length about the definition and meaning of Appalachia, but one unassailable reality is that there has never been a shortage of persons wanting to evangelize and socially redeem the people of the mountains. There is a long history in Appalachia of often well-intentioned outsiders and agencies coming in to work with the local people. Many of these projects lasted only as long as the grant or government money was available.

Since the frontier period, the people of Appalachia have often found themselves defined, studied, and stereotyped by those who came to "help." The Appalachian region still faces the same complexity of issues today, and Appalachians of every race and language continue to struggle with those image-crafters who would sanitize the South for some purist historical revision. The real Appalachia doesn't fit easily into the Old South tourist guidebooks or the one-size-fits-all economic development plans or into the nouveau-rich plans of those who wish to overlay a faux pattern of community in our cities and rural areas. Chattanooga is no exception. For many of the residents of our part of Appalachia, there is a legacy of broken promises and exclusion.

Despite this complicated legacy, the communities of Appalachia provide opportunities for those willing to listen, learn, serve, and work together on collaborative growth toward a real and communal vision of social justice. These visions come from a long and proud but often overlooked history of work done by unique individuals and institutions throughout Appalachia. These individuals themselves were as complex and imperfect as the region they served, but their efforts mirrored the resilience and determination characteristic of the people of the mountains. Theirs is a way and a work that has undergirded and inspires much of what is effective today in social change efforts in the Appalachian region.

So why is this history important? For us, it's important because these are "hidden" histories—stories of women and men who went "against the grain." And their stories go against the grain of the regional history and beliefs and stereotypes of our area. The reality is that with few notable exceptions, the history of social change in the South and of these movements has not been widely documented nor taught. It's not the southern history usually taught in our colleges and universities.

Martin Luther King Jr., Pete Seeger, Charis Horton, Rosa Parks, and Ralph Abernathy at Highlander, 1959. Photo courtesy Highlander Research and Education Center.

This social history is critically important also as personal history. These are stories that need to be told, heard, and understood by a new generation of Southerners who are individually and collectively facing a rapidly changing world. Our work today—whether in developing education programs for newly-arrived immigrants or racial reconciliation or seeking to address the root issues behind poverty and exclusion—has all been built on the efforts of those often unheralded persons working in the inner cities and rural settlements. I found out about many of them from reading old mission reports and obituaries. Even the Highlander Center was for me a discovery I made outside the South when I was in seminary. It was not a part of my history classes in high school, or part of the Chattanooga community history lifted up to visitors, unlike the Scopes Trial, the Trail of Tears, or the bottling of Coca-Cola. Highlander is one of those hidden histories, along with the settlement house movement and the Methodist deaconess movement.

As the Progressive Movement was emerging in the South, the idea of local people shaping their own destiny and creating solutions to their own problems began to take root. These ideas took the varied forms of the settlement house and settlement school movement, which focused on creating spaces (physical and mindful) for educational and personal development. Specifically, women found ways to make their voices heard in a culture where men dominated the narrative in both the personal and public space. As rural white women developed skills to create social change, they found a sisterhood and solidarity with black and Native American women in the common struggle for identity, economic independence, and personal development outside the limited scope of the family. These early struggles unintentionally created a common reason for women, people of color, mixed social classes, varied religions, and others to come together around shared issues of justice, equality, and access.

The deaconess movement emerged in the 1880s in the Methodist Episcopal Church (the Northern church) and in the 1890s in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. For both the southern and northern denominations of Methodism, the deaconess movement represented a serious effort by Methodist women to engage the issues of the world around them. According to John Patrick McDowell in *The Social Gospel in the South*, "The deaconess was to be a trained worker and a consecrated Christian, serving under the authority of the church." In 1924, a Methodist church publication described a deaconess as "a woman of suitable qualifications who has been led by the Holy Spirit to devote herself to Christlike service under the direction of the church."

These are stories that need to be told, heard, and understood by a new generation of Southerners who are individually and collectively facing a rapidly changing world.

The Methodist women's home mission groups were active in issues concerning immigration, city missions, alcohol and temperance, and issues affecting women and children. They also began to address issues of race—particularly lynching, including the formation of the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching in 1930. These early social reformers organized a meeting on the issue of race with African American women, including a pivotal meeting at Tuskegee with Mary Washington, the wife of Booker T. Washington. The Methodist women (and Methodist Church) were involved in other organizations, such as the Southern Sociological Congresses that met in the 1910s. These congresses attracted a variety of interested individuals: social workers, ministers, home mission workers, and lay people who came together to explore alternative solutions to juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health, and social service needs across the South.

The women's mission movements were influenced by the Social Gospel movement and a growing awareness of the church's role in the world. One of the prime concerns was the growth of work in the cities and rural areas, especially where new industries in the South were offering new opportunities for employment. Poverty, child labor, pay inequity, and related issues were all part of the city mission field. In England and in the northern U.S., settlement houses had played a marked role in ameliorating some problems, and the home mission leaders admired the work of Jane Addams of Hull House and Graham Taylor in Chicago.

The settlement house idea was brought South, with a twist. The houses would be called Wesley Houses, and soon there would be similar centers for the African

American community called Bethlehem Houses. Across the South, and in urban Appalachia, the Wesley and Bethlehem houses were established with a strong focus on reaching out to women and children. Deaconesses staffed the homes and engaged in outreach to the neighborhoods around them. Some of the homes were multicultural. Birmingham, for example, had a large immigrant population working in the steel mills. All of the homes served a variety of socio-economic groups and laid the way for early efforts to integrate (sometimes by accident) their communities.

Mary Washington (the third wife of Booker T. Washington) established a settlement house outside Tuskegee Institute and, as a result, created one of the first and only places in Alabama where poor white women and African American women (most of whom were freed slaves) could gather for education, professional skill development, and community building. Hers is another example of a "hidden history" in the South. Hull House in Chicago was established after the Tuskegee settlement house.

Deaconesses all received extensive training. Many were educated at Scarritt College in Nashville, which began in 1901 and developed some of the first sociology and later social work courses in the South, as well as an early partnership with Fisk University and Vanderbilt. Many early Southern social workers came out of the home mission movement and received more professionalized education and training through Scarritt and Fisk. Influenced by the Social Gospel movement, social work as a profession was still developing and refining its approach to social problems. The deaconesses (and early social workers and community organizers) soon were making their mark not only in the urban areas but also in their service with rural missions.

Emma Wheeler, the first African American female physician in Chattanooga, was not only a doctor but a social entrepreneur who created the first medical savings account in the country so that poor African Americans could pay what they could afford and receive good medical care. In the Tennessee mountains, settlements included the Pittman Center near Gatlinburg, the John Patten Center in the Sequatchie Valley, and Murphy Collegiate Institute in Sevierville, among others.

The history of the Highlander Center is much better known and documented, but what I saw on my first trip to New Market, Tennessee, is the defining symbol of its work since its founding in the 1920s. When I stepped inside the main building, the first thing I saw were thirty rocking chairs in a circle. One of the staff told me it was the belief of Highlander that people in a community simply needed a place and space to be empowered and to listen to one another. And thus the rocking chairs.

I have participated in workshops there, and a good part of the time we just sat and rocked and got to know each other better. Myles Horton (who had met Jane Addams) and Don West started the Highlander Folk School with the benefit of their own exposure to the Settlement House movement and visits to Danish folk schools. Clear from the beginning was the idea that real change comes from participatory democracy and community building. That idea remained pre-eminent as Highlander became engaged in labor activism, the Civil Rights struggle, the environmental movement in Appalachia, and now immigrant and gay and lesbian issues. Real change, the staff at Highlander believe, comes from bringing people together and listening to them—and empowering them to improve their own communities.

Appalachia has been a place of paradox, of old traditions and history and hard changes and disparities. It is an area where folks from the outside have both controlled the resources and economies and have also come in to ameliorate these issues. "Hidden histories" show how the voices of women, Native Americans, African Americans, and others, while not told in the popular narrative, significantly changed opportunities and resources available to the diverse groups who live in Appalachia. The deaconess movement and Highlander have some difference in motivation, but their goals are similar: to make lasting and sustainable change. To do so, it's important to listen and to serve.

It's a lesson we're still trying to learn. ❖

Michael Feely teaches history at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga and religion at Chattanooga State Community College, where he also serves as the coordinator of Hispanic Outreach. He is a longtime community activist, minister, and collector of stories. Valerie Radu, chair of the Department of Social Work at UTC, contributed to this article.

Kingsport Revisited

Joshua Dudley Greer

Clinchfield Railroad Station, Thomas McNeer Jr., undated; Citizens Bank, Alan Beuris, 2011

In the summer of 2011, fifteen students from the photography department at East Tennessee State University set out to make a series of photographs that reexamined historic views of Kingsport, Tennessee. Drawing from the vast archive of the Kingsport Public Library, students researched and eventually selected 75 sites to revisit and rephotograph. The original images were made by photographers both professional and pedestrian, spanning the years 1916 to 1964. Using the same 4x5 view cameras and employing a strict technical methodology, new photographs were made from the same vantage points as the originals and approximated the time of day and weather conditions whenever possible. These contemporary rephotographs are presented alongside their historic equivalents, and together they form a new context where neither image exists in time alone.

The concept of "rephotography" was first introduced in the late 1970's when photographer Mark Klett, along with Ellen Manchester and JoAnn Verburg, established the Rephotographic Survey Project to remake views of the American West from government-sponsored surveys of the nineteenth-century. Klett's team set the benchmark for technical and conceptual integrity and has inspired countless new forms of rephotography that have focused on everything from Civil War battle sites to the locations of Hollywood films. While many of Klett's landscape photographs show us how slow a century can be in geologic time, these photographs of Kingsport demonstrate how quickly the human presence can alter the landscape.

The process of remaking photographs can often provide insight into the original photographers' lives and the way they worked—not only in terms of technical making, but in the ways of seeing and creating, how they interacted with their communities, and when and why they made pictures. The details revealed through these photographs can be startling. We can see the cost of a cheeseburger in 1962 (20 cents) or uncover the "Blacks Only" entrance to the local movie theatre now covered over with a thin

layer of drywall. Some trees grow and obscure our view, while other portions of the landscape are eroded away by industry and economy. Some buildings are razed to make way for new construction, while others are preserved and repurposed.

While these photographs of Kingsport have the danger of being viewed simply as architectural records or flights of nostalgia, they are more about the passage of time and a sense of place. Change is constant and unavoidable, but the direction of that change can be steered. Whatever Kingsport's future may hold, we have these images to show us its past. ❖

Advance Auto Supply, David Peirce, 1956; Henry's Motorcycles, Cassie Williams, 2011

The Homestead Hotel, unknown photographer, 1925; West Sullivan Street, Samantha Adkins, 2011

W.A. Allen Motors Incorporated, Thomas McNeer Jr., 1946; Two Dads Café-n-Catering, Lauren Roberts, 2011

Strand Theatre Seating Area, Thomas McNeer Jr., 1947; Interior, Restoration Church, Trish Gibson, 2011

American Legion Swimming Pool, Thomas McNeer Jr., 1946; Kingsport Legion Swimming Pool, Andrew Scott, 2011

The Downtowner Motor Inn, Thomas McNeer Jr., 1962; Parking Garage, Samantha Adkins, 2011

Kingsport National Bank, David Peirce, 1956; First Tennessee Bank, John Hathaway, 2011

Palace Fruit and News, unknown photographer, 1938; Wallace News, Ashley Nease, 2011

Soil Test

Connie Jordan Green

Clear off a patch, any size,
say thirty by forty. Till the soil,
but not deep enough to hit deadpan,
bones of ancient ancestors. Scratch
furrows with your hoe, scarcely disturb
earth for carrots, lettuce, spinach—
seeds small as memory lost to humus.
Cut straight rows for beans, corn,
the sturdy who all summer march across
your garden, a line of teachers, parents
to bend in summer storms but never break.

On a cold March day, set out
broccoli, cabbage, their souls hardened
to spring freezes, winter's last snow.
As for tomatoes, bide your time
though warm days will tempt like longings
of your youth—the too easy kiss,
the car's backseat. In full season,
plant tomato vines, holes deep
to swallow stems, a few leaves
above ground, roots growing their secret
tendrils in June's heat.

As for squash, go in fear, one vine
creeping toward your ordered rows, a rogue
dictator over-running neighbor countries.
Pick male squash blossoms, leaving one
to fertilize the yellow females where bees
enter and enter through long summer days.
As for the soil itself, replenish
with composted leaves, stems, too-ripe fruits
of your garden, manure from cows, chickens, sheep—
earth's remains treasures you'll seek,
your life spent amending, amending.

Connie Jordan Green writes and gardens on a small farm in East Tennessee. Her novels, newspaper column, and poetry have received numerous awards, and she was recently honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the East Tennessee Writers Hall of Fame.

Serving Appalachian Music

Wayne Winkler

Although jazz may properly be considered America's indigenous music, the music of Appalachia holds a unique place in the heart and psyche of this nation. Of course Appalachian music has its roots in other places, most notably the British Isles, but the songs and tunes that came out of the hills and mountains have had a profound impact on our popular culture, spawning the distinctively American styles of country and western and bluegrass and contributing significantly to rock and roll.

The music of the region holds such a revered place in the hearts of listeners that aficionados in many parts of the United States and elsewhere have formed organizations to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the sounds of traditional Appalachian music. Naturally, most of these organizations are within Appalachia itself, especially in the area around the Tri-Cities of Tennessee and Virginia. They range from small groups of listeners who share an appreciation of the music, to larger organizations that hold concerts and festivals and provide musicians with venues and paying gigs, to those that study the music and the culture that generated it.

The organization that publishes this magazine is an example of the latter. The Center for Appalachian Studies and Services was formed at East Tennessee State University in 1984. Its purpose is to celebrate and interpret Appalachian culture and to provide resources to teach students and others about the history and heritage of the region. The university's Department of Appalachian Studies complements CASS and administers the Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music studies. ETSU is the only four-year university in the world with a comprehensive program in bluegrass music studies. Alumni include country music superstar Kenney Chesney, Tim Stafford (Blue Highway), Barry Bales (Alison Krauss and Union Station), Adam Steffey (Mountain Heart), Beth Stevens, Roy Andrade, Jill Andrews (the everybodyfields), and Hunter Berry (Rhonda Vincent and the Rage).

Nearby, in Bristol, Tennessee/Virginia, the Birthplace of Country Music Alliance focuses on

The Piedmont Stage at the 2011 Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion. Photo courtesy Justin Wiseman.

the city's historic legacy. Bristol was the site of the historic 1927 recording sessions that brought the world Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family and kicked off the commercial country music industry. BCMA was formed in 1994 to honor and promote artists from East Tennessee, southwest Virginia, and the southern Appalachian region in country, bluegrass, and other musical genres. The organization is currently working with the Smithsonian to develop a Cultural Heritage Center, scheduled to open in 2013.

BCMA recently merged with the Bristol Rhythm and Roots Reunion, an organization that produces a world-class three-day festival every September. When the first festival took place in October of 2001, it drew perhaps 2,000 people. A decade later, the festival attracted 45,000 from eight foreign countries and thirty-four states. BRRR also produces "preview" concerts all summer long, featuring artists who will also perform at the September festival.

Bristol boasts a third organization devoted to Appalachian music. The Appalachian Cultural Music Association operates the Mountain Music Museum in the Bristol Mall and works with the public television program *Song of the Mountains*, recorded in nearby Marion, Virginia. ACMA also supports the Carter Fold, founded in Hiltons, Virginia, by Janette Carter, daughter of A. P. and Sara Carter, two-thirds of the original Carter Family. ACMA funds the Leon Kiser Scholarship at ETSU. Named after a Bristol musician who worked to support bluegrass music and to gain recognition for Bristol as the birthplace of country music, the scholarship is awarded annually to students in ETSU's Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music program.

Fiddler Ralph Blizard founded the Traditional Appalachian Musical Heritage Association in 2001. The organization, headquartered just down the road from Bristol in Blountville, is dedicated to preserving the musical heritage of Appalachia through performance by musicians and serving as a resource for those interested in the music. Blizard, who died in 2004, feared that the musical heritage he had known all his life would soon be lost. For his efforts, he was awarded the 2002 National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and received the Governor's Award from the Tennessee Arts Commission in 2003. TAMHA plans to open a Ralph Blizard Museum in Blountville.

The Commonwealth of Virginia established The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail in 2004 to generate tourism and economic development in southwest Virginia by focusing on the area's rich musical tradition. The 300–mile route connects communities of musicians and performance venues from Rocky Mount to Breaks Interstate Park. The Crooked Road led to the Southwest Virginia Traditional Music Educational Plan, an initiative to support traditional music programs and instructors in the region and ensure that Appalachian music has a place in the curricula of public schools and community colleges.

Joe Shannon started Mountain Home Music in a delicatessen in Boone, North Carolina, in 1994. Actually, at the time it was known as Music in the Mountains, but Shannon discovered another group with that name and eventually settled on the present moniker. The concert series soon outgrew its original venue, and shows are now held in various locations. The organization received a 501 (c) (3) designation in 2004, and a grant from the Helen M. Clabough Charitable Foundation allowed for the purchase of sound reinforcement and recording equipment. Today Mountain Home Music has an archive of recorded shows available for purchase by members, radio stations, and other interested parties.

Appalshop, the multidisciplinary arts and education center in Whitesburg, Kentucky, offers a Traditional Music Program. It brings traditional Appalachian music into the daily lives of people by helping communities build and sustain ongoing events such as jam sessions, square dances, and storytelling events. The program organizes music and storytelling instruction for youth and adults, residencies, jam sessions, concerts, and radio broadcasts on Appalshop's community radio station WMMT-FM.

Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina, maintains an Appalachian Music Program. It offers instruction in some of the common Appalachian instruments and dances while teaching students about

NOTES

Logo courtesy The Crooked Road.

the historical development of the music. Students may participate in old-time and bluegrass ensembles as well.

The Digital Library of Appalachia provides online access to archival and historical materials related to the culture of the southern and central Appalachian region, including recordings of Appalachian music. Thirty-three member libraries, archives, and museums associated with the Appalachian College Association participate in the DLA. Visitors to the DLA website can listen to various recordings collected by member institutions.

One of these institutions is Berea College in Kentucky. It is the home of the Appalachian Sound Archives, containing mostly non-commercial sound and video recordings that document Appalachian history and culture, as well as the history of Berea. Holdings include traditional music, fiddle and banjo tunes, ballads and songs, and Old Regular Baptist singing. Collections can be searched online.

The Appalachian Highlands Music Association of Princeton, West Virginia, is dedicated to preserving and promoting bluegrass and old-time music. It puts on shows and other events to fund scholarships, and it also distributes a newsletter.

Farther away, but still in Appalachia, is Appalachian Music of Southwestern Pennsylvania. It furnishes recordings of music as well as live musicians. The Pittsburgh-based organization specializes in live performances and instruction in traditional old-time fiddling and string band music. It's also a resource center for old-time music news and information and offers individual and group instruction in a variety of instruments. It's one-stop shopping for lovers of Appalachian music: You can get lessons in clawhammer banjo, sign up for a newsletter, or hire a professional group to play at parties, weddings, or festivals.

This is by no means a complete listing of organizations dedicated to Appalachian music or even a complete list of such organizations within Appalachia. And the reach of Appalachian music extends far beyond the boundaries of the region. One of the more interesting organizations outside Appalachia is California's L. A. Folk Fest with its "Appalachian 7" series. This ongoing project joins traditional Appalachian music with contemporary artists, creating new, sincere versions of classic American tunes. The goal is to prove that "this music is not a museum piece, nor limited in context of geography or time. This music echoes throughout our lives as Americans, as musicians and as listeners and we hope to approach these songs with the distinctive sound of each artist, so that in the case of each song, we take from history and bring our own to it." The "Appalachian 7" project is a series of seven-inch vinyl records containing two to four songs, each a traditional mountain song re-interpreted by contemporary artists.

The music of Appalachia has been of interest to folklorists, musicologists, and other academics since the beginning of the twentieth century. But much of the credit for the vitality of those musical traditions today falls to these organizations and individuals whose enthusiasm for Appalachia ensures that future generations will know and appreciate the music that helped shape the popular culture of America. ❖

Wayne Winkler is director of public radio station WETS-FM in Johnson City, Tennessee.

ETSU's Old-Time Pride Band on stage at the Carter Family Fold. Photo courtesy Charlie Warden.

Music in Brief

Wayne Winkler

Blue Highway
Sounds of Home
Rounder Records

Approaching the two-decade mark, Blue Highway is still at the top of most critics' lists as one of the best bluegrass bands in the business. It's not hard to figure out why. The musicians in Blue Highway—Tim Stafford on guitar, Wayne Taylor on bass, Rob Ickes on dobro, Jason Burleson on banjo, and Shawn Lane on mandolin, fiddle, and guitar—are among the top instrumentalists in the field. Fans have been waiting for new material from the band; there were three new tracks on the retrospective *Some Day* that came out in 2010, but nothing all-new since 2008. The wait has been rewarded with *Sounds of Home*, the first collection of all-original material since 2001's *Still Climbing Mountains*. Of course, "Nobody's Fault But Mine" is a traditional blues number dating back nearly a century, but Blue Highway makes the song its own. All the songs feature not only fine musicianship but also deep, heartfelt emotion. The title track, composed by Shawn Lane, evokes *home* through everyday sounds like squeaks in a floor, the rustle of leaves, the voices of loved ones—sounds never noticed until they're gone. Tim Stafford's "Bluebird Days" also deals with memories of summers and loved ones. Wayne Taylor's "Only Seventeen" is less bucolic. Its subject is the loss of a young man in a coal-mining accident. These songs chronicle memories of home and family and honor the bluegrass tradition with a sound that is fresh and totally modern. ❖

The V-Roys
Sooner or Later
F.A.Y. Recordings

The V-Roys came storming out of Knoxville, Tennessee, in the early 1990s with a sound described as "walking the fine line between rootsy country and cutting-edge alternative rock." Their two studio albums were produced by Steve Earle and Ray Kennedy, and their final, live release, *Are You Through Yet?*, was recorded at the Down Home in Johnson City. A reported falling-out with Steve Earle and considerable road-weariness contributed to the band's demise by the end of the decade, but it is still remembered by many as the best band ever to come out of Knoxville. Now, more than a decade after their final performance, the V-Roys have released a compilation CD that will serve as a fine introduction for listeners who missed them the first time around. From the opening cut, "Guess I Know I'm Right," *Sooner or Later* reminds longtime listeners why they loved this band. There are even some previously-

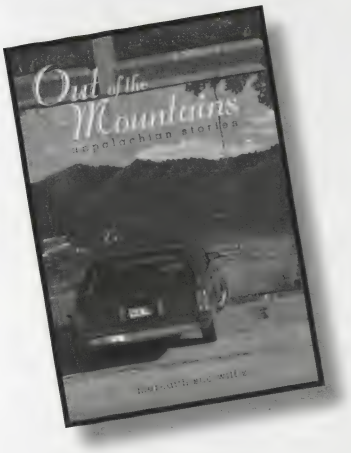
unreleased songs, including Tom T. Hall's "That's How I Got to Memphis" and the Coasters' "Smoky Joe's Café." ❖

The David Mayfield Parade
The David Mayfield Parade
Ninth Grade Records

Many people first heard David Mayfield as a member of Cadillac Sky or through his work with the Avett Brothers. From his musical beginnings in a family band through work as a session musician, songwriter, and producer, Mayfield is now fronting his own group, formed in early 2011. They've played hundreds of shows since then, including an appearance on NPR's *Mountain Stage*, recorded at the Paramount Center in Bristol, Tennessee. The band's self-titled debut opens with "Blue Skies Again," featuring an orchestral element inspired by Randy Newman. After that, we get a sample of Mayfield's wide-ranging musical tastes. He described the sound of the Parade as "some form of rock music that has folk roots. Americana, I guess." The band covers the classic country song "Sea of Heartbreak," and Mayfield's sister, noted songwriter Jessica Lea Mayfield, contributed "Looking for Love" and co-wrote "I Just Might Pray" with her brother. Mayfield co-wrote three of the songs with songwriter and record label co-founder Josh Joplin, who appears on the CD along with Scott and Seth Avett, Caitlin Rose, Paleface and Mo, and others. *The David Mayfield Parade* is a remarkable debut, reflecting the energy and sincerity that infuses the band's live performances. ❖

Jim Lauderdale
Reason and Rhyme
Sugar Hill Records

For the third time, Jim Lauderdale has teamed up with legendary Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter, and their latest collaboration might seem like a match made in Americana heaven. Unlike their previous collaboration, *Patchwork River*, *Reason and Rhyme* features bluegrass instrumentation and stylings. Of course Lauderdale's many excursions into bluegrass are not exactly traditional. They've been described as "grass with a twist." The combination of talented bluegrass pickers such as Mike Compton (mandolin), Scott Vestal (banjo), and Tim Crouch (fiddle), with Robert Hunter's lyrics, ensures that the music will be interesting. From the opening lines of "Cruel Wind and Rain," we are treated to Hunter's stories and imagery, his often dark visions leavened by humor. There are some very good songs on this disc. "Jack Dempsey's Crown" is a standout—the story of a boxer who wins the championship from Dempsey but then finds "there's nowhere to go but down." The Cajun tale "Not Let You Go" is another standout, as is the war-and-conflict allegory "Tiger and the Monkey." Other songs fall short of the standard, like the lyrically weak "Don't Give a Hang." *Reason and Rhyme* doesn't live up to the richness of *Patchwork River*, and at just thirty-five minutes seems a bit underdone. But the title cut is a standout and shows a great deal of promise for future collaborations. ❖



Out of the Mountains: Appalachian Stories
Meredith Sue Willis
Series in Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in Appalachia
Ohio University Press
Athens, Ohio, 2010
$ 24.95 paperback, $39.95 hard cover, 180 pages

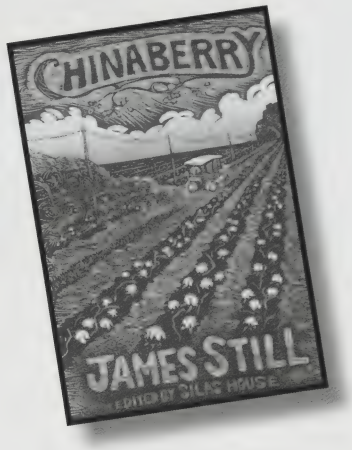
The adage "don't judge a book by its cover" should be ignored by readers of Meredith Sue Willis's short story collection *Out of the Mountains: Appalachian Stories*. The cover art uses a Kevin Scanlon photograph of a mural of Gauley Bridge, West Virginia. It sets the scene: triple Christian-style crosses dwarf a river boulder near a shabby trailer fishing camp poised precariously on another river boulder at the foot of idyllic tree-covered mountains. A rather beat-up Chevrolet Celebrity station wagon, sans license plate and driver, sits in front of the mural. A tattered Christian radio bumper sticker is barely discernible on its dented rear bumper. The quirky cover promises stories of believers and beliefs as well as a way both into and out of the mountains.

Character-driven and contemporary, the stories mirror situations we know: the acceptance of homosexuals or lack thereof; complicated family relationships; helpful and harmful religious practices; suicide; military obligations; marriages and divorces; moving away; moving back; and more. Throughout the collection readers meet folks who could live next door. They live in Appalachia, described by author Gurney Norman as "a very American place." They could tweet you on Twitter and friend you on Facebook and LOL at some of the situations in which Willis's characters find themselves.

Jim Wayne Miller, well-known Appalachian writer and scholar, liked to remind students, "A story is a made thing." Willis has impeccable credentials for making them. A small-town girl, she grew up in Shinnston, West Virginia, the child of two schoolteachers. Her adult life has been lived out of the region, mostly in New Jersey and New York, where she has built a successful writing career. Always modest, she managed to never get above her raisin', and she knows and cares about her roots. As a writer, she uses the imagination of her heart to explore her cultural heritage from many vantage points.

It would not be a Willis collection if there were no stories of acceptance, religiosity, teen angst, human rights, efforts for peace, and racial issues. And funeral homes. My favorite of the twelve stories is "Fellowship of the Kindred Minds," a tale of close siblings—one a gay Ph.D. computer specialist and the other an Appalachian literature professor in the middle of a divorce. They return to a small Appalachian town for the funeral of their father. Add to this the mother's recent attendance at a fundamentalist Christian church, and throw in visits to the family by its charismatic preacher and you have a Willis story of the first order. It's complicated, insightful, and humorous. ❖

Phyllis Wilson Moore researches and writes about the literary heritage of West Virginia. In 2004, her research served as the nucleus of "A Place Called Solid," the first official literary map of West Virginia.



Chinaberry
James Still (edited by Silas House) with an Afterword by Carol Boggess
The University Press of Kentucky
Lexington, Kentucky, 2011
$21.95 (hardcover), 153 pages

The Chinaberry tree is fast-growing but short-lived. Likewise, James Still's posthumous novel captures readers instantly but leaves them wanting more. Events take place at *Chinaberry*, a dynastic home in the eastern Texas flatlands, and, rather than the have-nots, the haves form the story's backdrop, unlike Still's beloved first novel, *River of Earth*, where a seven-year-old boy narrates his hardscrabble Kentucky life. This time the storyteller—whose name we get in the book's next-to-last sentence—is thirteen-year-old Jim, very small for his age, and, like his Kentucky counterpart, possessing a mind that soaks up the adult world about him with uncanny, retentive discernment.

With his father's friend Ernest and two roustabouts, Cadillac and Rance, whom Ernest dubs "the knuckleheads" for their dimwitted high jinks, Jim travels from Alabama to Texas to pick cotton. His father wants him to experience Texas, and he does, in surprising ways, for they soon meet Anson Winters. When Anson sees the boy, an attachment starts that drives the novel. This diminutive thirteen-year-old becomes the replacement for the six-year-old son Anson lost to death.

A master of underlying tension, Still creates uneasiness by his description of Anson's intimate micromanaging: making the boy sleep in the same bedroom he shares with his wife Lurie, checking his naked body daily for Rocky Mountain fever ticks, picking him up and carrying him, supervising his dress, kissing him and demanding that he kiss him back—all so that Anson might surround this surrogate with his love, as for his own lost boy.

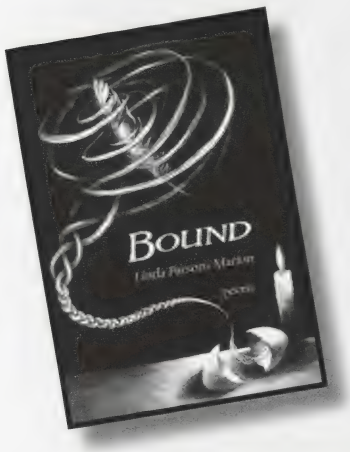
The storyteller Still excels when he reveals the beautiful Lurie (Lucretia), whose blond hair resembles corn silk and whose spick-and-span clothes display her like an exquisite doll transported somehow fresh and clean onto the Texas dirt. Still balances the queasiness Anson's emotional needs arouse with the beguiling stories Lurie tells the adolescent, her only confidant. Unable to reveal her beloved secrets to the Mexican maids or family, she lays herself bare to Jim so that he will understand Anson and love him. Jim learns how her first encounter with Anson when she was twelve drove her to get him to love her and marry her. Underneath the boy's new life, strangely charmed, rumblings from Jim's Alabama family prefigure his return home like a Texas thunderstorm's relentless coming, and he is torn between wanting to stay and wanting to go home.

Readers of *River of Earth* will find Still's language different but his style masterfully the same. *Chinaberry* resembles a memoir of adolescent months spent in Texas, cross-stitched every once in a while with descriptions of Jim's world and of his beloved Alabama home. For this reason, Still uses adult speech, nearly devoid of Appalachian vernacular—except for "We can never get plumb to the bottom of anybody." And this adult narrator knows how to tell stories: of the twin girls Anson first loves, of Anson's father Big Jack from Tennessee who captured land and success, of the obscure Comanche Blunt who can anticipate others' wants, and of Lurie, with whom the adolescent is from the first moment infatuated. Throughout, Still uses what Wallace Stegner called "shadow casting," clever one-sentence foreshadowing that worries and entices readers.

The book is handsome in all ways. In the introduction, an homage to Still, acclaimed Appalachian writer Silas House explains how he went about editing the manuscript, for him a sacred text. In the afterword, Professor Carol Boggess of Mars Hill College ponders whether *Chinaberry* is autobiographical, offering insight into Still's lifelong fascination with the story.

Just before the novel's moving conclusion, the boy watches Ernest's car vanish "into the mist of distance, fixed in time and memory": the time when the world was a quiet place for a boy to explore and learn and love, and the memory of an Appalachian who can never completely let go of his Alabama home. ❖

Charles Lloyd, professor emeritus of Marshall University's Classics Department, is the coauthor of *Ruth Etting: America's Forgotten Sweetheart* (2010).



Bound: Poems
Linda Parsons Marion
Wind Publications
Nicholasville, Kentucky, 2011
$15 (paperback), 73 pages

Linda Parsons Marion is an Appalachian poet, but her skilled use of popular language and tradition makes her work of great interest to non-Appalachians as well. In this volume, work, especially gardening, spurs thoughts of ancestors and offspring. At least this is one way to look at the complex of tightly wound concerns featured in this new collection of poems, *Bound*.

But there is another way to consider *Bound*: The work involved is in tying things up, in binding them fast, securing them safely. The occupations of the poet's forbears, like sewing and barbering, come into play here, for Marion pictures the family as a product of the exacting work of the hands. In the poem "Hands," her grandmother Marie "lived by those hands, kneaded broadcloth through/ needle at the lint-snowed garment factory."

More than a family matriarch, Marie is a force, a personality the rest of the family must listen to, whether they want to or not. Certainly her husband didn't enjoy being called to order for his "drunken misdirections" or her daughter for her "moral shenanigans." But Marie's rectitude cannot be denied because it flows from the tireless work of her hands.

As a child, the poet confesses in "Braid," she didn't understand such work or the pain it caused her grandmother:

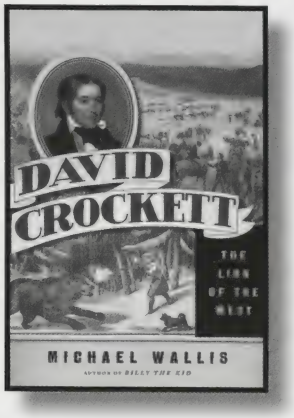
> I think nothing of how long my grandmother
> stands, her corns and bunions, boxy shoes cut away
> to ease their throb, nothing of her shoulders' ache
> at the factory machine.

But as she writes today, Marion certainly understands the value of this work. In "My Father Makes the Beans," she writes of her father, a salesman, who also worked a night job at the mall, as he:

> drives into
> the harsh light, customers needing what only
> he can give. Again I am waving on the steps
> until he's a dot on the hill, squaring his shoulders
> against the world of fathers whose lifeblood
> tars the highway like the false gold of heaven.

The language of these poems is at times precisely detailed and at other times full of imaginative leaps. Marion requires the readers' own willingness to work, to be patient and take the time to see through what may appear at first to be tangles or lost strands. Such efforts will be greatly rewarded by these unique meditations on work and rewards of things bound tight by love. ❖

David Salner's second book of poems, *Working Here*, was published in 2010.



David Crockett: The Lion of the West
Michael Wallis
W.W. Norton & Company
New York, 2011
$27.95 (hardcover), 380 pages

In this well-researched biography, Michael Wallis separates truth from romanticized myth. He offers an interesting antidote to the legends created by Crockett's political allies and enemies; by Crockett's autobiography; by dozens of movies; and, in the mid-twentieth century, by a popular Disney television series that caricatured this frontiersman, soldier, and congressman.

Wallis sets the story of Crockett within the historical context of America's growing pains. The massive land grab that could not satisfy the nation's obsession with western expansion took hold of Crockett as he moved his family farther into the backwoods of Tennessee. His "itchy feet" often compelled him to leave his family and set out on long and dangerous hunting trips into the uncharted wilderness. Crockett served with Andrew Jackson during the Creek wars and took advantage of the treaties Jackson signed with the Indians to obtain more land.

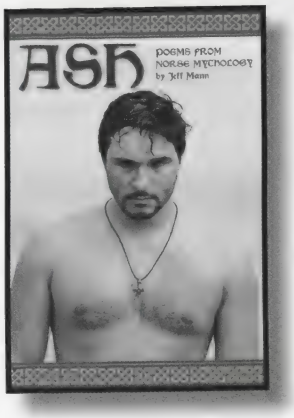
Wallis portrays Crockett as a tough frontiersman with a Scots-Irish heritage that gave him the fortitude to survive several brushes with death and the determination to settle untouched land. However, he notes that many of the qualities that contributed to Crockett's legend were factors in his failures. Crockett left his family for years at a time, and his fierce independence and constant search for virgin land resulted in financial ruin. In politics, Crockett's unwillingness to compromise resulted in his inability to get any legislation passed during his tenure in Congress.

Using evidence from Crockett's autobiography, speeches, correspondence, and the Congressional Record, Wallis presents a much-needed perspective on Crockett's life, one that goes far beyond "the king of the wild frontier" moniker and places him solidly within the context of his time. ❖

Peggy Henderson Murphy is a doctoral student at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

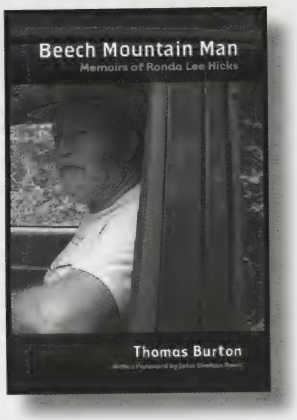
Books in Brief

Edwina Pendarvis



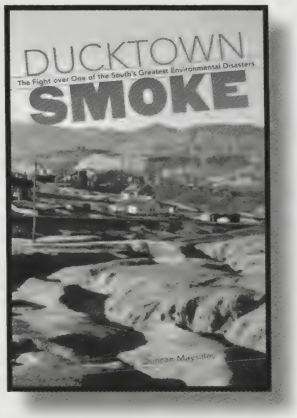
Ash: Poems from Norse Mythology
Jeff Mann (Rebel Satori Press, 2011)

The characters and events in Jeff Mann's poetic interpretations of ancient legends are taken from Norse mythology, but his re-imagining of these tales combines the contemporary with this olden time. The poem "Gnawing" moves from warriors hearing the world weakening as the serpent Nidhogg gnaws the ash tree (a giant tree that, in these myths, supports the entire universe) to modern Appalachians hearing their world weaken: "We hear it accelerated, the gnawing, over our keyboards, our steering wheels, our bourbons. . . . Rhododendrons / are shaking softly under chemical-scented rain. . . . Somewhere in the coalfields, streams run bright orange." With this collection, Mann reminds readers of the strong connections among Norse, Gaelic, and Celtic cultures and the culture of Appalachia. The poems in the book are more artistically decorous than the cover suggests. Sexuality is a strong presence in this work. It typically is in Mann's poetry, but the sexuality is less domestic here, in keeping with the violent, romantic spirit of Norse myth. ❖



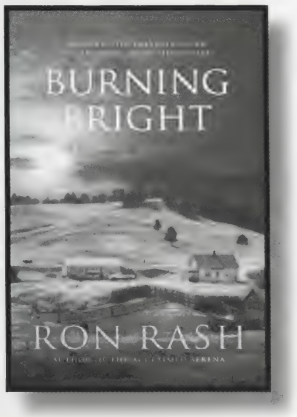
Beech Mountain Man: Memoirs of Ronda Lee Hicks
Thomas Burton (University of Tennessee Press, 2009)

The memoirs of Ronda Lee Hicks, as told to Thomas Burton, present a collaborative portrayal of a western North Carolina "mountain man" of the sort often depicted in stereotypes on television and in the movies. From two families of storytellers, including Ray Hicks (Ronda's cousin, known for his Jack tales), Ronda reflects on his ties to home, made stronger by stints outside the mountains. He makes observations about relatives, romances, escapades, crimes, and jobs. The book is organized into sections: Beech Mountain, Army, Prison, Men and Women, Back to the Mountains, Wrong Place at the Wrong Time, and Reflections. Burton offers brief introductions to stories within these sections. One of those introductions illustrates the nature of some of the anecdotes as well as the understated approach Burton takes as editor: "Ronda had trouble with a number of men associated with the woman from New York, several of whom were her present or former husbands." ❖



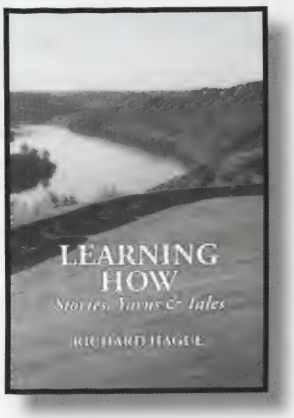
Ducktown Smoke: The Fight over One of the South's Greatest Environmental Disasters
Duncan Maysilles (University of North Carolina Press, 2011)

Maysilles' history of the Ducktown Basin, also known as the Copper Basin, gives a balanced account of one of the most contested sites in Appalachia. The basin, 50 square miles in area, lies mostly in Georgia, except for the northern quarter in Tennessee and a small section in North Carolina. Maysilles begins by chronicling the basin's swift transition from a wooded, lightly populated corner of the Cherokee Nation to a sulphurous, smoke-filled, deforested copper boomtown. With descriptions and analyses of the economic and human benefits as well as the environmental devastation, he traces the history of this landscape through the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the many lawsuits of the late 1800s and early 1900s, particularly the 1907 landmark suit, *Georgia v. Tennessee Copper Co.*, the first Supreme Court decision on air pollution. This thorough and fascinating history is rich ore itself, with its multifaceted perspectives representing different interests. Much more than a cautionary tale, this history shows the significance of litigation related to mining, pollution, and global warming, and, by implication, the likely dire consequences of increased environmental deregulation. ❖



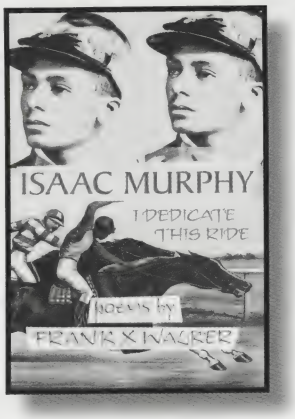
Burning Bright
Ron Rash (HarperCollins, 2010)

Borrowing a phrase from William Blake's poem "The Tyger," Ron Rash found a pitch-perfect title for the poignant story from which this collection takes its title. And the collection has a lot in common with Blake's best-known poem: It raises questions about how evil originated and came to be tolerated. Another line from the poem—"What hand dare seize the fire"—fits the nature of the main characters in these stories about men, women, and children who dare seize the fire of something dangerous in a desperate effort to take care of people they love, to find happiness, or to survive. From egg-stealing to grave-robbing, from a child's cold and lonely death to a musician's playing "Free Bird" to roadhouse patrons just "Waiting for the End of the World," Rash's stories are convincing in their sympathetic depiction of the courage needed to face destruction and fight against it. ❖



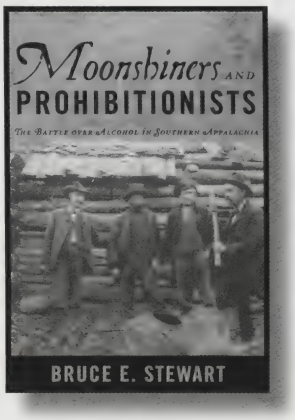
Learning How: Stories, Yarns & Tales
Richard Hague (Bottom Dog Press, 2011)

These stories are full of intoxicating and intoxicated characters, like Kinney Sparkers and his cousin Skinner Feist, two mechanics you wouldn't want working on your car. In the story "Stop. Look. Back.," Hague catalogs family heirlooms that include gallstones, a silk bag made from stockings worn by singer Patsy Cline, a bottle of tears, a toe, and a photo of the "lonesomest man in the universe." Surrealistic and poetic, this story confounds identities in a meditation on human kinship. Wild, sundry, or serious, these stories remind us to count each other as sister and brother and to marvel at our good luck in spite of our blundering selves. ❖



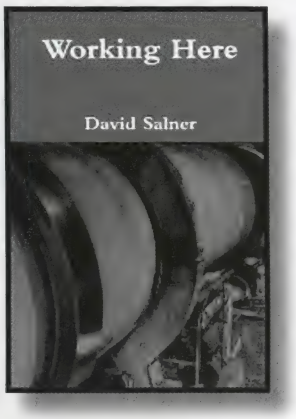
Isaac Murphy: I Dedicate This Ride
Frank X. Walker (Old Cove Press, 2010)

This poetry collection is a tribute to African American jockey Isaac Murphy (born Isaac Burns), the first rider to win the Kentucky Derby three times. In the poem "More than Luck," Walker tells what it took to win the Derby: "You've got to be patient and skilled to slip through / the windows and doors that blink open during a race. / But it don't hurt if your horse has already / made up its mind to win / before you ask permission to climb aboard." Known to use a whip as little as possible, Murphy was said to *talk* his horses into winning. In the poem "Touch," Lucy Murphy says her husband "lets them know he's not there / to be master. He lets them think / he's just the wind blowing gently / across their supple necks." These poems reflect a time when most jockeys in the Derby were African American, and they introduce, with subtle artistry, perhaps the greatest jockey in the history of thoroughbred racing. ❖



Moonshiners and Prohibitionists: The Battle over Alcohol in Southern Appalachia
Bruce E. Stewart (University Press of Kentucky, 2011)

Stewart tracks important shifts in popular sentiment, politics, and laws about making and drinking alcohol from the early 1800s to the early 1900s. Presenting the battle over alcohol in western North Carolina as part of the larger story of Appalachia's transition from a rural to an urban-industrial economy, he describes conditions before the Civil War, when rural North Carolinians typically regarded moonshiners as respectable rebels against do-gooders and government interference. He cites instances of revenuers, for years after the war, being considered by many mountain dwellers as deserving of the hostile, often violent reception they got from moonshiners. Stewart goes on to document the effects of economics and class on attitudes and behavior in what had been strongholds of support for the right to make and drink whiskey. He shows how, in the late nineteenth century, increased social pressures to industrialize the region brought about prohibition and virtually the end of whiskey-making as part of a subsistence economy. ❖



Working Here
David Salner (Rooster Hill Press, 2010)

By the author of *John Henry's Partner Speaks*, this collection opens in Baltimore, where the narrator earned his first paycheck, at age fifteen. Poems set in Maryland, West Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania, but mostly in the West—Arizona, Utah, and the iron range of Minnesota—combine images from workaday life with images from fine art and literature. The collection depicts the lives of working men and women with empathy but without sentimentality. Salner's lively skepticism lends many of the poems a wry humor. In "What the River Said," a river complains about the idealist philosopher Heraclitus, who said (or is said to have said), "You can't step into the same river twice." "Twice?" fusses the river. "If he'd have stepped into a river even once, he'd have been a better man for it." As this poem suggests, Salner's work honors the material realities of the demanding "here" in which so many people live and work. ❖

The Last Mountain Weaves Powerful Message about the Controversial Hunt for Coal in West Virginia

Brad Lifford

About midway through a screening of *The Last Mountain*, it occurred to me that the DVD player and the surround-sound system that enabled and enriched my viewing experience were powered by the industry being denounced by the documentary playing on the flat-screen television.

I considered the DVD itself. Chances are it was created by an electronics device that was powered by electricity coming from coal, too—a notion that could at least be assumed for most of the other DVDs in my extensive collection.

Then I took the room in fully. There was a lamp ablaze. The overhead light fixture sported four incandescent bulbs.

What is a person concerned about energy consumption to do? That troubling question became so distracting that I lost focus on the film. At one point I had to tap the rewind button to ensure that a statistic trumpeted by the filmmakers—that there are more U.S. workers employed by the wind farming industry than there are coal miners—was actually something I saw. And it was.

That two-minute snippet of personal viewing experience is somewhat microcosmic of *The Last Mountain* itself. The subject matter, mountaintop removal mining—a term that essentially encapsulates blowing the top off mountains to get at hidden coal seams—is more than a little vexing. Documentarian Bill Haney is well-meaning, but as the narrative churns along, the film becomes so sprawling that it loses focus, determined to connect so many dots that it sucks away some of the power in its message.

The Last Mountain is most effective when it stays close to its epicenter of Coal River Mountain in southern West Virginia. The film reports that mountaintop removal mining has destroyed 500 Appalachian mountains. In the film, Massey Energy, at that time the largest coal mining company in West Virginia (Massey has since been bought by Alpha Natural Resources), plans to strip-mine a large swath of Coal River Mountain.

Massey's plans are met with fierce resistance, from a mixture of local people who live near the mountain and some concerned individuals from

Maria Gunnoe at a mountaintop removal site. Photograph courtesy Uncommon Productions.

outside the area, most notably Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., an environmentalist of national renown.

Not surprisingly, Kennedy's star power draws Haney's camera lens often. He is shown debating a coal company executive in a West Virginia diner, speaking at protest rallies where there are lines drawn between locals for and against mining, and delivering dialogue: "We don't have a right to destroy something we can't recreate."

Other outsiders join forces with the locals as well. A crew of twentysomethings from an activist group named Climate Ground Zero moves in to disrupt Massey's mining operations, including tethering themselves to mining equipment and perching in trees slated to be felled during the mining operation.

Haney's overall intent is so clear that it makes one wonder why footage involving Climate Ground Zero wasn't edited with a heavier hand. One tree-sitter explains the glee he felt when he saw the surprised looks on Massey workers' faces when they realized he was in the treetops. There was an undeniable sense of self-satisfaction in his tale.

The images of mountains being exploded are so visceral that one would hope there is no gray area here. But there is.

The message from coal mining executives, which Haney does not neglect, is straightforward: Energy must come from somewhere; jobs for West Virginians must come from some industry; the state has coal to be mined.

Kennedy, in one of his best moments, asks rhetorically: "If coal mining is such a boon for West Virginia workers, why is it one of the nation's poorest states?"

A statistic from the film offers some insight. With its reliance on increased mechanization, as opposed to the more laborious underground mining, coal mining production in West Virginia has increased 140 percent in the past thirty years, while 40,000 jobs have been eliminated.

The Last Mountain is worth seeing, as it provides a sense of the immensity of the energy question. At 95 minutes, it does feel a bit long, and the filmmakers make questionable choices that could have been fixed with tighter editing. From the Coal River Valley, we venture into Pennsylvania to visit a town nestled in the shadow of a coal-burning power plant, and also up to Rhode Island, where a monastery is ably harnessing wind power—the tie to West Virginia being that Coal River Mountain is considered ideal for a wind farm.

Again, though, the film is at its best when it stays close to home. Maria Gunnoe, a resident of the valley whose family has always worked in the coal mines, speaks to great effect about the scars left by mountaintop removal. And no one person speaks more powerfully than Ed Wiley, whose granddaughter attends Marsh Fork Elementary. A former coal worker, Wiley stands up to the governor of West Virginia to protest the plight of Marsh Fork.

The images of that elementary school in the Coal River Valley are the ones that stick with me, even more than the exploding mountains. Looming over Marsh Fork Elementary is a towering coal silo that appears to be so close to the school that the two could be connected brick-to-brick. Above the silo and the school, a lagoon of coal sludge sits like a specter. It's hard to fathom gray area there. ❖

Brad Lifford is former movie critic for the *Kingsport Times-News* in Tennessee.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. speaking at a protest rally. Photograph courtesy Uncommon Productions.

Signing Off

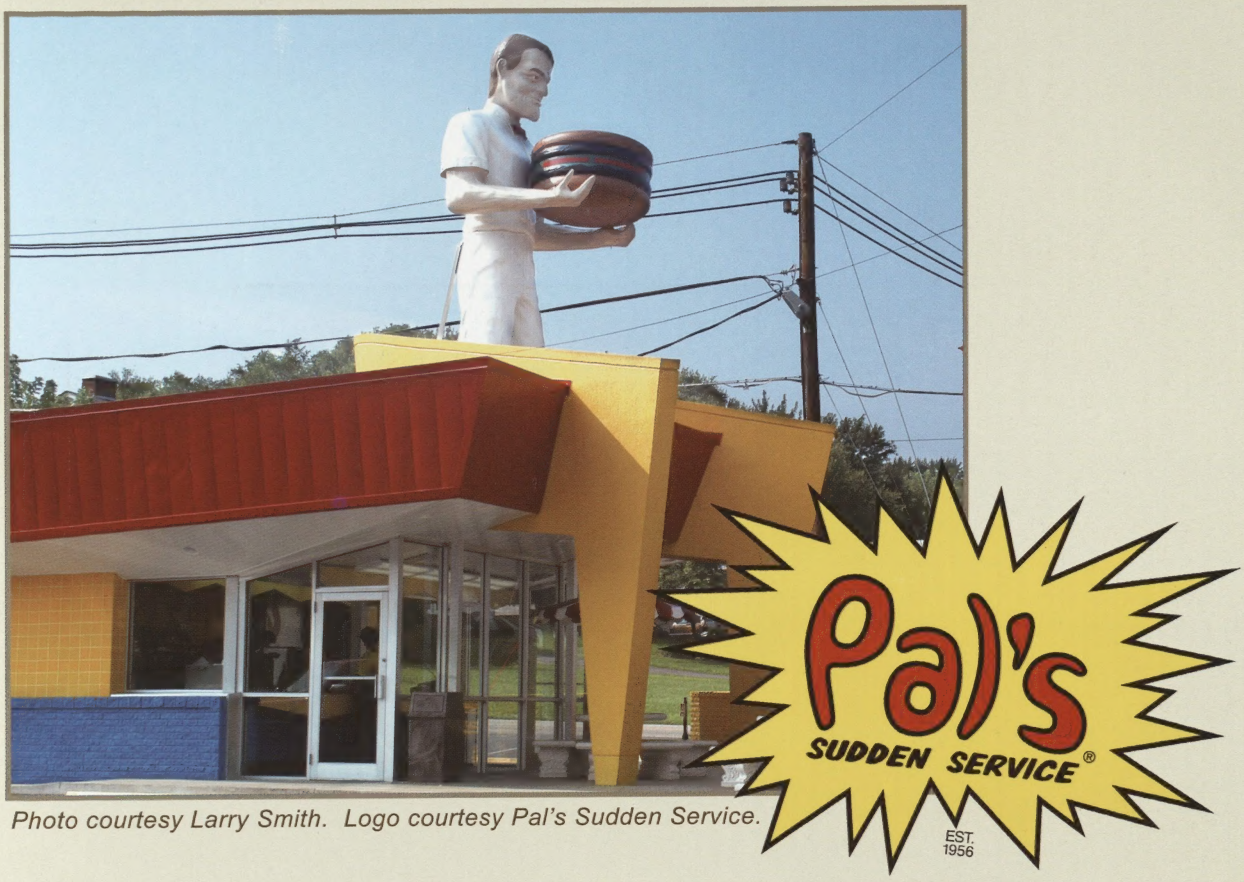


Photo courtesy Larry Smith. Logo courtesy Pal's Sudden Service.

Pal Barger opened the first Pal's Sudden Service in Kingsport, Tennessee, in 1956, and today the company operates twenty-three locations, all within a 60-mile radius of the original restaurant. The phrase "sudden service" is more than just a part of the company's logo; it's an essential part of the philosophy that has made Pal's a success. According to CEO Thom Crosby, Pal's has the fastest service time in the industry. He says that a Pal's restaurant could wait on 1,500 cars in eight and a half hours while the company's closest competitor would take thirty hours to serve the same number of patrons. "Sudden service" is one reason Pal's is the only restaurant company in America ever to have won the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

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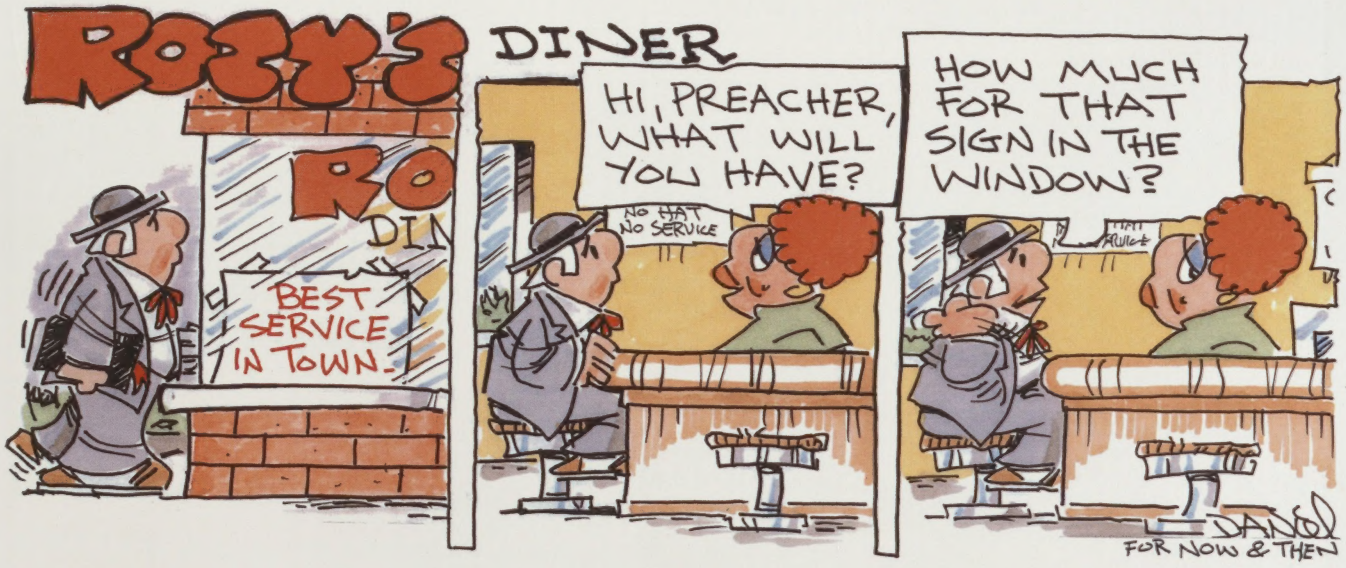

Charlie Daniel is editorial cartoonist for the *Knoxville News Sentinel*.